THE

Ambitious STEP-MOTHER.

A

TRAGEDY.

As it is Acted at the *New Theatre* in *Little-Lincolns-Inn-Fields.*

By Her Majesties Servants.

WRITTEN BY

N. ROWE, Esq; Author of *TAMERLANE.*

The Second Edition, with the Addition of a New SCENE.

-----Decet hæc dare dona novercam. Ovid Metam. lib. 9.

Vane Ligur, frustraq; animis elata superbis.
Nequiequam-------tentâsti lubricus artes
Advenit qui vestra dies muliebribus armis
Verba redargueret. Virg. Æn. lib. 11.

LONDON,

Printed for *R. Wellington* at the *Dolphin and Crown*, the West-end of St. *Paul's* Church-yard; and *Thomas Osborne* near *Grays-Inn-Walks.* 1702.

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----Dent hoc dare dona nefarum. Ovid Metam. lib. 9.

Nunc Lignum, Fistulæ, animis clara Imperabis.
Nequicquam----tentabi lubricus artes
Advenit qui vetera diros multicubrios arnis
Verba redargnerat. Virg. Æn. lib. 11.

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TO THE

Right Honourable

THE

Earl of Jersey,

L^d. Chamberlain of His Majesty's Houshold, &c.

My LORD,

IF any thing may attone for the Liberty I take in offering this Trifle to your Lordship, it is, that I will engage not to be guilty of the Common Vice of Dedications, nor pretend to give the World an Account of the many good Qualities they ought to admire in your Lordship. I hope I may reckon on it as some little Piece of Merit, in an Age where there are so many People write Panegyricks, and so few deserve 'em. I am sure you ought not to sit for your Picture, to so ill a Hand as mine. Men of your Lordship's Figure and Station, tho' Useful and Ornamental to the Age they live in, are yet reserv'd for the Labours of the Historian, and the Entertainment of Posterity; nor ought to be aspers'd with such Pieces of Flattery while living, as may render the true History sus-

 pected

pected to thoſe that come after. That which ſhould take up all my Care at preſent, is moſt humbly to beg your Lordſhip's Pardon for Importuning you upon this Account; for imagining that your Lordſhip, (whoſe Hours are all dedicated to the beſt and moſt important Uſes) can have any Leiſure for this Piece of Poetry. I beg, my Lord, that you will receive it, as it was meant, a Mark of my Entire Reſpect and Veneration.

I hope it may be ſome advantage to me, that the Town has not receiv'd this Play ill; to have depended meerly upon your Lordſhips good Nature, and have offer'd ſomething without any Degree of Merit, would have been an unpardonable Fault, eſpecially to ſo good a Judge. The Play it ſelf, as I preſent it to your Lordſhip, is a much more perfect Poem than it is in the Repreſentation on the Stage. I was led into an Error in the writing of it, by thinking that it would be eaſier to retrench than to add: But when I was at laſt neceſſitated, by reaſon of the extreme Length, to cut off near ſix hundred Lines I found that it was maim'd by it to a great Diſadvantage. The Fable (which has no manner of Relation to any Part of true Hiſtory was left dark and intricate, for want of a great Part of the Narration, which was left out in the firſt Scene; and the Chain and Connexion, which ought to be in the Dialogue, was interrupted in many other Places. But ſince what was omitted in the Acting is now kept in, I hope it may indifferently Entertain your Lordſhip at an unbending Hour. The Faults which are moſt generally found, (and which I could be very proud of ſubmitting to your Lordſhip's Judgment, if you can have leiſure for ſo trivial a cauſe,) are, that the Cataſtrophe in the fifth Act is barbarous, and ſhocks the Audience. Some People, whoſe Judgment I ought to have a Deference for, have told me that they wiſht I had given the latter Part of the Story quite another turn; that *Artaxerzes* and *Ameſtris* ought to have been preſerv'd, and made happy in the Concluſion of the Play; that beſides the Satisfaction which the Spectators would have had to have ſeen two Vertuous (or at leaſt Innocent) Characters, rewarded and ſucceſsful, there might have been alſo a more Noble and Inſtructive Moral drawn that way. I muſt confeſs if this be an Error, (as perhaps it may,) it is a voluntary one

and

and an Error of my Judgment: Since in the writing I actually made ſuch a ſort of an Objection to my ſelf; and choſe to wind up the ſtory this way. Tragedies have been allow'd, I know, to be written both ways very beautifully. But ſince Terror and Pity are laid down for the Ends of Tragedy by the great Maſter and Father of Criticiſm, I was always inclin'd to fancy, that the laſt and remaining Impreſſions, which ought to be left on the minds of an Audience, ſhould proceed from one of theſe two. They ſhould be ſtruck with Terror in ſeveral parts of the Play, but always Conclude and go away with Pity, a ſort of regret proceeding from good nature, which, tho' an uneaſineſs is not always diſagreeable, to the perſon who feels it. It was this paſſions that the famous Mr. *Otway* ſucceeded ſo well in touching, and muſt and will at all times affect people, who have any tenderneſs or humanity. If therefore I had ſav'd *Artaxerxes* and *Ameſtris*, I believe (with ſubmiſſion to my Judges) I had deſtroy'd the greateſt occaſion for Compaſſion in the whole Play. Any body may perceive, that ſhe is rais'd to ſome degrees of happineſs, by hearing that her Father and Husband are living, (whom ſhe had ſuppos'd dead,) and by ſeeing the Enemy and Perſecuter of her Family dying at her feet, purpoſely, that the turn of her death my be more ſurprizing and pitiful. As for that part of the Objection, which ſays, that Innocent perſons ought not to be ſhewn unfortunate; The ſucceſs and general approbation, which many of the beſt Tragedies that have been writ, and which were built on that foundation, have met with, will be a ſufficient anſwer for me.

That which they call the Poetical Juſtice, is, I think, ſtrictly obſerv'd, the two principal Contrivers of Evil, the Stateſman and Prieſt, are puniſh'd with death; and the Queen is depos'd from her authority by her own Son; which, I ſuppoſe, will be allowed as the ſevereſt mortification that could happen to a woman of her Imperious Temper.

If there can be any excuſe for my Entertaining your Lordſhip with this *Detail* of Criticiſms, it is, That I would have this firſt mark of the honour I have for your Lordſhip appear with as few faults as poſſible. Did not the prevailing Character of your Lordſhip's Excellent humanity and good nature encourage

me

me, what ought I not to fear from the Niceneſs of your Taſte and Judgment? The Delicacy of your Reflexions may be very fatal to ſo rough a Draught as this is; but if I will believe, (as I am ſure I ought to do) all Men that I have heard ſpeak of your Lordſhip, they bid me hope every thing from your Goodneſs. This is that I muſt ſincerely own, which made me extremely Ambitious of your Lordſhip's Patronage for this Piece. I am but too ſenſible, that there are a Multitude of Faults in it; but ſince the good Nature of the Town has cover'd, or not taken notice of 'em, I muſt have ſo much diſcretion, as not to look with an affected Nicety into 'em my ſelf. With all the Faults and Imperfections which it may have, I muſt own, I ſhall be yet very well ſatisfied with it, if it gives me an Opportunity of reckoning my ſelf from this time,

Your Lordſhip's moſt Obedient

and devoted humble Servant

N. Rowe.

PRO-

PROLOGUE,

Spoke by Mr. *Batterton.*

IF *Dying Lovers yet deserve a Tear,*
If a sad Story of a Maids Despair.
Yet move Compassion in the pitying Fair,
This Day the Poet does his Art employ,
The soft Accesses of your Souls to try.
Nor let the Stoick boast his Mind unmov'd,
The Brute Philosopher, who ne're has prov'd
The Joy of Loving or of being Lov'd;
Who scorns his humane Nature to confess,
And striving to be more than Man, is less.
Nor let the Men, the weeping Fair accuse
Those kind Protectors of the Tragick Muse,
Whose Tears did moving Otway's *Labours crown,*
And made the poor Monimia's *Grief their own:*
Those Tears, their Art, not Weakness has confest,
Their Grief approv'd the Niceness of their Tast,
And they wept most, because they judg'd the best.
O cou'd this Age's Writers hope to find
An Audience to Compassion thus inclin'd,
The Stage would need no Farce, *nor Song nor Dance,*
Nor Capering Monsieur brought from Active France.
Clinch *and his Organ-Pipe, his Dogs and Bear,*
To native Barnet *might again repair,*
Or breath with Captain Otter Bankside *Air.*
Majestick Tragedy shou'd once agen
In Purple Pomp adorn the swelling Scene.
Her search shou'd ransack all the Ancient's Store,
The Fortunes of their Loves and Arms explore,
Such as might grieve you, but shou'd please you more.
What Shakespear *durst not, this bold Age shou'd do,*
And famous Greek *and* Latin *Beauties show.*
Spakespear, *whose Genius to its self a Law,*
Cou'd Men in every height of Nature draw,
And copy'd all but Women that he saw.
Those Ancient Heroines your Concern shou'd move,
Their Grief and Anger much, but most their Love;
For in the Account of every Age we find
The best and faireſt of that Sex were kind,
To Pity Always and to Love inclin'd.

Assert,

Aſſert, ye fair ones, who in Judgment ſit,
Your Ancient Empire over Love and Wit;
Reform our Senſe, and teach the Men to Obey;
They'll leave their Tumbling if you lead the way.
Be but what thoſe before to Otway *were;*
O were you but as kind, we know you are as fair

Dramatis Perſonæ.

M E N.

Artaxerxes, *Prince of* Perſia, *Eldeſt Son to the King* Arſaces, *by a former Queen.*	Mr. Verbruggen.
Artaban, *Son to* Arſaces, *by* Artemiſa.	Mr. Booth.
Memnon, *Formerly General to* Arſaces, *now diſgrac'd*; *a Friend to* Artaxerxes.	Mr. Batterton.
Mirza, *Firſt Miniſter of State, in the Intereſt of* Artemiſa *and* Artaban.	Mr. Freeman.
Magas, *Prieſt of the Sun, Friend to* Mirza *and the Queen.*	Mr. Bowman.
Cleanthes, *Friend to* Artaban.	Mr. Pack.
Orchanes, *Captain of the Guards to the Queen.*	Mr. Baily.

W O M E N.

Artemiſa, *Formerly the Wife of* Tiribaſus *a* Perſian *Lord, now married to the King, and Queen of* Perſia.	Mrs. Barry.
Ameſtris, *Daughter to* Memnon, *in love with, and belov'd by* Artaxerxes.	Mr. Bracegirdle.
Cleone, *Daughter to* Mirza, *in love with* Artaxerxes, *and belov'd by* Artaban.	Mrs. Bowman.
Beliza, *Confident to* Cleone.	Mrs. Martin.

THE

THE
Ambitious Step=mother.

ACT I. SCENE I. *A Royal Place.*

Enter at ſeveral Doors Mirza *and* Magas.

Mir. WHat bring'ſt thou, *Magas*? Say, how fares the King?
Mag. As one, whom when we number with the living,
We ſay the moſt we can; tho ſure it muſt
Be happier far, to quit a wretched Being,
Than keep it on ſuch terms: For as I enter'd
The Royal Lodging, an univerſal horror
Struck thro my Eyes, and chill'd my very Heart;
The chearful day was every where ſhut out
With care, and left a more than midnight darkneſs,
Such as might ev'n be felt: A few dim Lamps,
That feebly lifted up their ſickly heads,
Lookt faintly thro the ſhade, and made it ſeem
More diſmal by ſuch light; while thoſe that waited,
In ſolemn ſorrow, mixt with wild amazement,
Obſerv'd a dreadful ſilence.
Mirz. Didſt thou ſee him?
Mag. My Lord, I did; treading with gentle ſteps,
I reacht the Bed, which held the poor remains
Of great *Arſaces*, juſt as I approacht,
His drooping lids, that ſeem'd for ever clos'd,
Were faintly rear'd, to tell me that he liv'd:
The balls of ſight, dim and depriv'd of motion,
Sparkled no more with that Majeſtick fire,
At which ev'n Kings have trembled; but had loſt
Their common uſeful office, and were ſhaded
With an eternal night; ſtruck with a ſight,
That ſhew'd me humane nature ſaln ſo low,

I haſtily retir'd.

Mirz. He dyes too ſoon;
And fate if poſſible muſt be delay'd;
The thought that labours in my forming brain,
Yet crude and immature, demands more time.
Have the Phyſicians giv'n up all their hopes?
Cannot they add a few days to a Monarch,
In recompence of thouſand vulgar fates,
Which their Drugs daily haſten?

Mag. As I paſt
The outward Rooms, I found 'em in Conſult;
I askt 'em if their Art was at a ſtand,
And could not help the King; they ſhook their Heads,
And in moſt grave and ſolemn wiſe, unfolded
Matter, which little purported, but words
Rankt in right learned phraſe; all I could learn, was;
That Nature's kindly warmth was quite extinct,
Nor could the breath of art kindle again
Th' Etherial fire.

Mirz. My Royal Miſtreſs *Artemiſa*'s fate,
And all her Son Young *Artaban*'s high hopes,
Hang on this lucky Criſis; ſince this day,
The haughty *Artaxerxes* and old *Memnon*
Enter *Perſepolis:* The yearly Feaſt
Devoted to our glorious God the Sun,
Hides their deſigns under a holy veil;
And thus Religion is a mask for Faction.
But let their Guardian *Genii* ſtill be watchful,
For if they chance to nod, my waking vengeance
Shall ſurely catch that moment to deſtroy 'em.

Mag. 'Tis ſaid the fair *Ameſtris*, *Memnon*'s Daughter,
Comes in their company.

Mirz. That fatal Beauty,
With moſt malignant influence, has croſt
My firſt and great Ambition. When my Brother,
The great *Cleander* fell by *Memnon*'s hand,
(You know the ſtory of our Houſes quarrel)
I ſought the King for Juſtice on the Murderer;
And to confirm my intereſt in the Court,
In confidence of mighty wealth and power,
A long deſcent from Noble Anceſtors,
And ſomewhat of the Beauty of the Maid,
I offer'd my *Cleone* to the Prince
Fierce *Artaxerxes*; he, with rude diſdain
Refus'd the proffer; and to grate me more,

Publickly

Publickly own'd his paſſion for *Ameſtris*;
And in deſpight ev'n of his Fathers Juſtice,
Eſpous'd the Cauſe of *Memnon*.
Mag. Ev'n from that noted Æra, I remember
You dated all your ſervice to the Queen,
Our Common Miſtreſs.
Mirz. 'Tis true, I did ſo; Nor was it in vain;
She did me right, and ſatisfy'd my vengeance;
Memnon was baniſht, and the Prince diſgrac'd
Went into Exile with him. Since that time,
Since I have been admitted into her Council,
And have ſeen her, with unerring judgment guide
The Reins of Empire, I have been amaz'd,
To ſee her more then manly ſtrength of Soul,
Cautious in good ſucceſs, in bad unſhaken;
Still arm'd againſt the uncertain turns of Chance,
Untoucht by any weakneſs of her Sex,
Their Superſtition, Pity, or their Fear;
And is a Woman only in her Cunning.
What ſtory tells of great *Semiramis*,
Or Rolling Time, that gathers as it goes,
Has added more, ſuch *Artemiſa* is.
Mag. Sure 'twas a mark of an uncommon Genius,
To bend a Soul like that of great *Arſaces*,
And Charm him to her ſway.
Mirz. Certainly Fate,
Or ſomewhat like the force of Fate, was in it;
And ſtill whene're remembrance ſets that ſcene
Before my Eyes, I view it with amazement.
Mag. I then was young, a ſtranger to the Court,
And only took the ſtory as reported
By different Fame, you muſt have known it better.
Mirz. Indeed I did, then favour'd by the King,
And by that means a ſharer in the ſecret.
'Twas on a day of publick Feſtival,
When Beauteous *Artemiſa* ſtood to view,
Behind the Covert of a Golden Lattice,
When King and Court returning from the Temple;
When juſt as by her ſtand *Arſaces* paſt,
The Windows, by deſign or chance, fell down,
And to his view expos'd her bluſhing Beauties.
She ſeem'd ſurpriz'd, and preſently withdrew,
But ev'n that moment was an age in Love:
So was the Monarchs heart for paſſion moulded,
So apt to take at firſt the ſoft impreſſion.

Soon as we were alone, I found the Evil
Already paſt a Remedy, and vainly
Urg'd the reſentment of her Injur'd Lord:
His Love was deaf to all.

Mag. Was *Tiribaſus* abſent?

Mir. He was then General of the Horſe,
Under old *Memnon* in the *Median* War.
But if that diſtant view ſo much had charm'd him,
Imagine how he burnt, when, by my means,
He view'd her Beauties nearer, when each action,
And every graceful ſound conſpir'd to charm him:
Joy of her Conqueſt, and the hopes of Greatneſs,
Gave Luſtre to her Charms, and made her ſeem
Of more than mortal Excellence. In ſhort,
After ſome faint reſiſtance, like a Bride
That ſtrives a while, tho eager for the bliſs,
The furious King enjoy'd her,
And to ſecure their Joys, a ſnare was laid
For her unthinking Lord, in which he fell
Before the fame of this could reach his Ears.
Since that, ſhe ſtill has by ſucceſsful Arts
Maintain'd that power, which firſt her beauty gain'd.

Mag. With deepeſt foreſight, wiſely has ſhe laid
A ſure foundation of the future greatneſs
Of *Artaban*, her only darling Son.
Each buſie thought, that rouls within her breaſt,
Labours for him; the King, when firſt he ſicken'd,
Declar'd he ſhould ſucceed him in the Throne.

Mir. That was a point well gain'd; nor were the Elderſhip
Of *Artaxerxes* worth our leaſt of fears,
If *Memnon's* intereſt did not prop his Cauſe.
Since then they ſtand ſecur'd, by being joyn'd,
From reach of open force; it were a Maſterpiece
Worthy a thinking head, to ſow diviſion
And ſeeds of Jealouſie, to loſe thoſe bonds,
Which knit and hold 'em up, that ſo divided,
With eaſe they might be ruin'd.

Mag. That's a difficulty, next to impoſſible.

Mir. Ceaſe to think ſo;
The wiſe and active conquer difficulties,
By daring to attempt' em; ſloth and folly
Shiver and ſhrink at ſight of toil and hazard,
And make th' impoſſibility they fear;
Ev'n *Memnon's* temper ſeems to give th' occaſion;
Of wrong impatient, headlong to revenge;

Tho

Tho bold, yet wants that faculty of thinking,
That ſhould direct his Anger. Valiant Fools
Were made by Nature for the wiſe to work with;
They are their Tools, and 'tis the Sport of Stateſmen,
When Heroes knock their knotty Heads together;
And fall by one another.
Mag. What you've ſaid,
Has wak'd a Thought in me which may be lucky;
E're he was baniſht for your Brother's Murder,
There was a Friendſhip 'twixt us; and tho' then
I left his barren Soil, to root my ſelf
More ſafely, under your auſpicious Shade,
Yet ſtill pretending Tyes of ancient Love,
At his arrival here I'll viſit him;
Whence this Advantage may at leaſt be made,
To ford his ſhallow Soul.
Mirz. Oh much, much more;
'Twas happily remembred, nothing gulls
Theſe open, unſuſpecting Fools, like Friendſhip;
Dull heavy things! Whom Nature has left honeſt
In meer frugality, to ſave the Charge
She's at in ſetting out a thinking Soul;
Who, ſince their own ſhort underſtandings reach
No farther than the preſent, think ev'n the wiſe,
Like them, diſcloſe the Secrets of their Breaſts,
Speak what they think, and tell Tales of themſelves:
Thy function too will varniſh o're our Arts,
And ſanctifie diſſembling.
Mag. Yet ſtill I doubt,
His caution may draw back, and fear a Snare.
Mirz. Tell him, the better to aſſiſt the fraud,
That ev'n I wiſh his Friendſhip, and would gladly
Forget that cauſe of hate, which long has held us
At mortal Diſtance, give up my Revenge,
A grateful Offering to the publick Peace.
Mag. Could you afford him ſuch a Bribe as that,
A Brothers Blood yet unatton'd——
Mirz. No *Magas*,
It is not in the Power if Fate to raze
That thought from out my Memory;
Eternal Night, 'tis true, may caſt a Shade
On all my Faculties, extinguiſh Knowledge;
And great Revenge may with my Being ceaſe;
But while I am, that ever will remain,
And in my lateſt Spirits ſtill ſurvive.

Yet, I would have thee promiſe that, and more,
The Friendſhip of the Queen, the Reſtitution
Of his Command, and Honours, that his Daughter
Shall be the Bride of *Artaban*; ſay any thing?
Thou know'ſt the Faith of Courtiers, and their Oaths,
Like thoſe of Lovers, the Gods laugh at 'em.

Mag. Doubt not my Zeal to ſerve your Royal Miſtreſs,
And in her Intereſt yours, my Friend and Patron.

Mirz. My worthy Prieſt! Still be my Friend, and ſhare
The utmoſt of my Power, by greatneſs rais'd. [*Embracing.*
Thou like the God thou ſerv'ſt, ſhall ſhine aloft,
And with thy Influence rule the under World.
But ſee! the Queen appears; ſhe ſeems to muſe,
Her thoughtful Soul, labours with ſome event
Of high import, which buſtles like an Embryo
In its dark Room, and longs to be diſclos'd.
Retire, leſt we diſturb her. [*They retire to the ſide of the Stage.*

Enter the Queen attended.

Qu. Be fixt, my Soul, fixt on thy own firm baſis!
Be conſtant to thy ſelf; nor know the Weakneſs,
The poor Irreſolution of my Sex:
Diſdain thoſe ſhews of Danger, that would bar
My way to glory. Ye Diviner Pow'rs!
By whom 'tis ſaid we are, from whoſe bright Beings
Thoſe active Sparks were ſtruck which move our Clay,
I feel, and I confeſs the Etherial energy,
That buſie reſtleſs Principle, whoſe appetite
Is only pleas'd with greatneſs like your own:
Why have you clogg'd it then with dull maſs,
And ſhut it up in Woman? Why debas'd it
To an Inferiour part of the Creation?
Since, your own heavenly Hands miſtook my Lot,
'Tis you have err'd, not I. Could Fate e're mean
Me, for a Wife, a Slave to *Tiribaſus!*
To ſuch a thing as he! a Wretch! a Husband!
Therefore in juſt Aſſertion of my ſelf,
I ſhook him off, and paſt thoſe narrow Limits,
Which Laws contrive in vain for Souls born great.
There is not, muſt not be a bound for greatneſs;
Power gives a Sanction, and makes all things juſt.
Ha! *Mirza!* Worthy Lord! I ſaw thee not, [*Seeing* Mirza.
So buſie were my Faculties in thought.

Mirz. The

Mir. The Thoughts of Princes dwell in ſacred Privacy,
Unknown and venerable to the Vulgar; [*Bowing.*
And like a Temples innermoſt receſſes,
None enters, to behold the hallow'd Myſteries,
Unbidden of the God that dwells within.

Qu. Wiſe *Mirza!* were my Soul a Temple, fit
For Gods, and Godlike Counſels to inhabit,
Thee only would I chooſe of all Mankind,
To be the Prieſt, ſtill favour'd with acceſs;
Whoſe piercing Wit, ſway'd by unerring Judgment,
Might mingle ev'n with aſſembled Gods,
When they deviſe unchangeable Decrees,
And call 'em Fate.

Mirz. Whate're I am, each Faculty,
The utmoſt Power of my exerted Soul,
Preſerves a Being only for your Service;
And when I am not yours, I am no more.

Qu. Time ſhall not know an end of my acknowledgments,
But every Day of our continu'd Lives
Be witneſs of my Gratitude, to draw
The Knot, which holds our common Intereſt, cloſer;
Within ſix Days, my Son, my *Artaban*,
Equally dear to me as Life and Glory.
In publick ſhall Eſpouſe the fair *Cleone*,
And be my Pledge of everlaſting Amity.

Mirz. O Royal Lady! you out-bid my Service;
And all returns are vile, but Words the pooreſt.

Qu. Enough! be as thou haſt been, ſtill my Friend,
I ask no more. But I obſerve of late,
Your Daughter grows a Stranger to the Court;
Know you the Cauſe?

Mirz. A melancholy Girl;
Such in her Infancy her Temper was,
Soft even beyond her Sex's tenderneſs;
By Nature pitiful, and apt to grieve
For the miſhaps of others, and ſo make
The Sorows of the wretched world her own:
Her Cloſet and the Gods ſhare all her time,
Except when (only by ſome Maid attended)
She ſeeks ſome ſhady ſolitary Grove,
Or by the gentle murmurs of ſome Brook
Sits ſadly liſtning to a Tale of Sorrow,
Till with her tears ſhe ſwell the narrow ſtream.

Qu. It is not well, theſe thoughts muſt be remov'd:

That eating Canker Grief, with waſtful ſpight,
Preys on the Roſie bloom of Youth and Beauty:
But Love ſhall chace away theſe clouds of ſadneſs;
My Son ſhall breathe ſo warm a gale of ſighs,
As ſhall diſſolve thoſe Iſicles, that hang
Like death about her heart.
Attend us, holy *Magus*, to the King,
Nor ceaſe to importune the mighty Gods
To grant him health, tho much I fear in vain.
[*Exit Queen*, Magas, *and Attendants.*

Manet Mirza.

Mirza. This medling Prieſt longs to be found a fool;
Thinks he that *Memnon*, Souldier as he is,
Thoughtleſs and dull, will liſten to his ſoothing?
Howe're, I gave his wiſe Propoſal way,
Nay, urg'd him to go on; the ſhallow Fraud
Will ruine him for ever with my Enemies,
And make him firmly mine, ſpite of his Fears,
And natural Inconſtancy.
While Choice remains he will be ſtill unſteady,
And nothing but Neceſſity can fix him. [*Exit.*

Enter Artaxerxes, Memnon, *and Attendants.*

Artax. Methinks, my noble Father and my Friend,
We enter here like Strangers, and unlook'd for:
Each buſie Face we meet, with wonder ſtarts,
And ſeems amaz'd to ſee us.
Mem. Well may th' ignoble Herd
Start, if with heedleſs ſteps they unawares
Tread on the Lyons walk; a Prince's Genius
Awes with ſupiner Greatneſs all beneath him.
With Wonder they behold the great *Arſaces*
Reviv'd again in Godlike *Artaxerxes.*
In you they ſee him, ſuch as oft they did
Returning from his Wars, and Crown'd with Conqueſt,
When all our Virgins met him on the way,
And with their Songs and Dances bleſt his Triumph:
Now baſely aw'd by factious Prieſts and Women,
They ſtart at Majeſty, and ſeem ſurpriz'd,
As if a God had met 'em. In Honour's Name,
Why have we let this be? Why have we languiſht?
And ſuffer'd ſuch a Government as this

To

To waſte our Strength, and wear our Empire low?
Art. Curſt be the means by which theſe Ills aroſe,
Fatal alike to me as to my Country;
Which my great Soul, unable to revenge,
Has yet with Indignation only ſeen,
Cut off by Arts of Coward Prieſts and Stateſmen,
Whom I diſdain'd with ſervile Smiles to court,
From the great Right which God and Nature gave,
My Birthright to a Throne.
Mem. Nor Prieſts, not Stateſmen,
Could have compleated ſuch an Ill as that,
If Woman had not mingled in the Miſchief;
If *Artemiſa* had not, by her Charms,
And all her Sex's Cunning, wrought the King,
Old, obvious to her Arts, decay'd in greatneſs,
Dead to the Memory of what once he was,
Juſt crawling on the Verge of wretched Life,
A Burthen to himſelf, and his Friends Pity;
Among his other Failings, to forget
All that a Father and a King could owe
To ſuch a Son as you were; to cut you off
From your Succeſſion, from your Hopes of Empire,
And graft her upſtart Offspring on to Royalty,
Artax. But if I bear it,
Oh may I live to be my Brothers Slave,
The Scorn of thoſe brave Friends that own my Cauſe,
May you my Father ſpurn me for a Coward,
May all my noble Hopes of Love and Glory
Leave me to vile Deſpair. By Heaven, my Heart
Sits lighter in my Boſom, when I think
That I this Day ſhall meet the Boy my Brother,
Whoſe young Ambition with aſpiring Wings
Dares ev'n to mate my Greatneſs.
Mem. Fame, that ſpeaks
Minutely every Circumſtance of Princes,
Deſcribes him bold, and fiercely fond of Power,
Which ev'n in ſpight of Nature he affects.
Impatient of Command, and hardly daigning
To be controll'd by his Imperious Mother.
'Tis ſaid too (as no means were left untry'd,
Which might prepare and fit him to contend
With a ſuperiour right of Birth and Merit,)
That Books, and the politer Arts, (which thoſe
Who know admire) have been his Care; already
He mingles in their Councils, and they truſt

His Youth with Secrets of important Villany.
The Crowd, taught by his Creatures to admire him,
Stile him a God in Wiſdom.

Artax. Be that his Glory,
Let him with Pedants hunt for Praiſe in Books,
Pore out his Life amongſt the lazy Gown-men,
Grow old and vainly proud in fancy'd Knowledge,
Unequal to the Task of vaſt Ambition.
Ambition! The Deſire of active Souls,
That puſhes 'em beyond the Bounds of Nature,
And elevates the Hero to the Gods.
But ſee! my Love, your beauteous Daughter comes,
And ev'n Ambition ſickens at her Sight.

Enter Ameſtris *attended.*

Revenge, and fierce Deſires of Glory, ceaſe
To urge my Paſſions, maſter'd by her Eyes;
And only gentle Fires now warm my Breaſt.

Ameſt. I come, my Father, to attend your Order. [*To* Memnon.

Mem. 'Tis well; and I would have thee ſtill be near me,
The Malice of the Faction which I hate,
Would vent it ſelf even on thy Innocence,
Wert thou not ſafe under a Father's Care.

Art. Oh ſay a Lover's too; nor can you have
An Intereſt in her ſafety more than mine.
Love gives a Right ſuperiour ev'n to Nature;
Or Love is Nature, in the nobleſt meaning,
The Cauſe and the Preſerver of the World.
Theſe Arms that long to preſs thee to my Boſome,
For ever ſhall defend thee.

Mem. Therefore, my Son,
Unto your Care I leave our common Charge;
Tigranes with our Friends expects my Orders;
Thoſe when I have diſpatcht, upon the Inſtant
I will return, and meet at your Apartment. [*Ex.* Mem.

Art. Come to my Arms, and let me hide thee there
From all thoſe Fears that vex thy beating Heart,
Be ſafe and free from all thoſe fancy'd Dangers,
That haunt thy Apprehenſion.

Ameſ. Can you blame me?
If from Retirement drawn and pleaſing Solitude,
I fear to tempt this ſtormy Sea the World,
Whoſe every Beach is ſtrew'd with Wrecks of Wretches,
That daily periſh in it. Curſt Ambition!

Why

Why doſt thou come to trouble my Repoſe,
Who have even from my Infancy diſclaim'd thee?
Art. Ceaſe to complain, my Love, and let no Thought
But what brings Peace and Joy approach thy Breaſt.
Let me impart my manly Fires to thee,
To warm thy Fancy to a Taſte of Glory;
Imperial Power and Purple Greatneſs wait thee,
And ſue for thy Acceptance; by the Sun,
And by *Arſaces* Head, I will not mount
The Throne of *Cyrus*, but to ſhare it with thee.
Ameſ. Vain ſhews of Happineſs! Deceitful Pageantry!
Ah! Prince, hadſt thou but known the Joys which dwell
With humbler Fortunes, thou wouldſt curſe thy Royalty.
Had Fate allotted us ſome obſcure Village,
Where only bleſt with Life's Neceſſities,
We might have paſs'd in Peace our happy Days,
Free from the Cares which Crowns and Empires bring;
There no Step-mother, no Ambitious Brother,
No wicked Stateſmen, would with Impious Arts,
Have ſtrove to wreſt from us our ſmall Inheritance,
Or ſtir the ſimple Hinds to noiſie Faction.
Our Nights had all been bleſt with balmy Slumbers,
And all our waking Hours been crown'd with Love.
Art. Exquiſite Charmer! now by *Oroſmades*
I ſwear, thy each ſoft Accent melts my Soul:
The Joy of Conqueſt, and Immortal Triumph,
Honour and Greatneſs, all that fires the Hero
To high Exploits, and everlaſting Fame,
Grows vile in ſight of thee. My haughty Soul,
By Nature fierce, and panting after Glory,
Could be content to live obſcure with thee,
Forgotten and unknown of all but my *Ameſtris*.
Ameſ. No, Son of great *Arſaces*, though my Soul
Shares in my Sex's Weakneſs, and would fly
From Noiſe and Faction, and from fatal Greatneſs,
Yet for thy Sake, thou Idol of my Heart,
(Nor will I bluſh to own the ſacred Flame,
Thy Sighs and Vows have kindled in my Breaſt)
For thy lov'd Sake, ſpight of my boding Fears,
I'll meet the Danger which Ambition brings,
And tread one Path with thee: Nor ſhalt thou loſe
The glorious Portion which thy Fate deſigns thee,
For thy *Ameſtris* Fears.
Art. Give me thoſe Fears;

For all things will be well.

Ames. Grant it, ye Powers:
This Day before your Altars will I kneel,
Where all my Vows shall for my Prince be offer'd;
Still let Success attend him, let Mankind
Adore in him your visible Divinity;
Nor will I importune you for my self,
But summ up all I ask in *Artaxerxes.*

Art. And doubt not but the Gods will kindly hear
Their Virgin Votary, and grant her Pray'r;
Our glorious Sun, the source of Light and Heat,
Whose Influence chears the World he did create,
Shall smile on thee from his Meridian Skies,
And own the kindred Beauties of thy Eyes;
Thy Eyes, which, could his own fair Beams decay,
Might shine for him, and bless the World with day. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II. SCENE. I. *An Apartment of the Palace*

Enter Memnon *and* Magas.

Mem. THose who are wise in Courts, my holy Sir,
Make Friendships with the Ministers of State,
Nor seek the Ruines of a wretched Exile,
Lest there should be Contagion in Misfortunes,
And make the Alliance fatal.

Mag. Friends like *Memnon*
Are worth being sought in Danger; since this Age
Of most flagitious Note, degenerates
From the fam'd Vertue of our Ancestors,
And leaves but few Examples of their Excellence,
Whom should we seek for Friendships but those few,
Those happy few, within whose Breasts alone,
The Footsteps of lost Virtue yet remain?

Mem. I prithee Peace! for nothing misbecomes
The man that would be thought a friend, like flattery;
Flattery! the meanest kind of base dissembling,
And only us'd to catch the grossest fools:
Besides, it stains the honour of thy function,
Which like the Gods thou serv'st, should be sincere.

Mem.

Mag. By that ſincerity, by all the ſervice
My friendſhip can expreſs, I would approve it;
And tho I went not from *Perſepolis*
Companion of your Exile, yet my Heart
Was with you ſtill; and what I could I did,
Beſeeching every God for your return;
Nor were thoſe Vows in vain, ſince once again
'Tis given me to behold my friend, nay more,
Would you agree, to keep you here for ever.

Mem. The Gods, 'tis true, are juſt, and have, I hope,
At length decreed an end of my misfortunes,
At leaſt they give me this, to dye with honour,
When Life grows vile or burthenſome.

Mag. By me they offer all that you can ask,
And point an eaſie way to happineſs.
Spare then the wounds our wretched Country fears,
The thouſand ills which Civil Diſcord brings.
Oh ſtill that noiſe of War, whoſe dread Alarms
Frightens repoſe from Country Villages,
And ſtirs rude tumult up and wild diſtraction
In all our peaceful Cities.

Mem. Witneſs for me,
Ye awful Gods, who view our inmoſt thoughts!
I took not arms, till urg'd by ſelf defence,
The eldeſt Law of Nature.
Impute not then thoſe ills which may inſue
To me, but thoſe who with inceſſant hate
Purſue my life; whoſe malice ſpreads the flame
To every Part, that my devoted fabrick
May in the univerſal ruine burn.

Mag. And yet ev'n there perhaps you judge too raſhly;
Impetuous Paſſion hurries you ſo faſt,
You cannot mark the advantage of your fortune.

Mem. Has not the Law been urg'd to ſet a brand
Of foul diſhonour on my hoary head?
Ha! am I not Proſcrib'd?

Mag. Forget that thought,
That jarring grates your Soul, and turns the Harmony
Of bleſſed Peace to curſt infernal Diſcord.
Hate and its fatal Cauſes all ſhall ceaſe,
And *Memnon*'s Name be honour'd as of old,
The braveſt and the moſt ſucceſsful Warrior,
The fortunate Defender of his Country.

Mem. 'Tis true, (nor will it ſeem a Boaſt to own)
I have fought well for *Perſia*, and repay'd

The Benefit of Birth with honeſt Service,
Full fifty Years harneſt in rugged Steel,
I have endur'd the biting Winters Blaſt,
And the ſeverer Heats of parching Summer;
While they who loll'd at home on lazy Couches
Amidſt a Crew of Harlots and ſoft Eunuchs,
Were at my Coſt ſecure in Luxury.
This is a Juſtice *Mirza*'s ſelf muſt do me.

Mag. Even he, tho' fatal Accidents have ſet
A moſt unhappy Bar between your Friendſhip,
Lamenting that there had been Cauſe of Enmity,
And owning all the Merit of your Vertues,
Will often wiſh Fate had ordain'd you Friends.

Mem. Our God the Sun ſhall ſooner change his Courſe,
And all the Impoſſibilities, which Poets
Count to extravagance of looſe Deſcription,
Shall ſooner be.

Mag. Yet hear me, noble *Memnon*;
When by the Duty of my Prieſthood mov'd,
And in juſt Deteſtation of the Miſchiefs
Inteſtine Jars produce, I urg'd wiſe *Mirza*,
By his Concurrence, Help, and healing Counſels,
To ſtop thoſe Wounds at which his Country bleeds;
Griev'd at the Thought, he vow'd, his whole Endeavour
Should be to cloſe thoſe Breaches:
That even *Cleander*'s Death, and all thoſe Quarrels
That long have nouriſht Hatred in your Houſes,
Should be in Joy of publick Peace forgotten.

Mem. Oh couldſt thou charm the Malice of a Statesman,
And make him quit his Purpoſe of Revenge,
Thy preaching might reform the guilty World,
And Vice would be no more.

Mag. Nay, ev'n the Queen
Will bind the Confirmation by her Son,
And asks the fair *Ameſtris* for Prince *Artaban*.

Mem. Were that the only Terms, it were impoſſible.

Mag. You would not ſhun the Alliance of a Prince?

Mem. No; for it is the Glory of my Fate,
That *Artaxerxes* is deſign'd my Son,
With every Grace and Royal Vertue crown'd;
Great, juſt and merciful, ſuch as Mankind,
(When, in the Infant World, firſt Governments
Began by chance), would have deſign'd a King.

Mag. Unbounded Power, and height of Greatneſs, give
To Kings that Luſtre, which we think divine;

The

The Wiſe who know 'em, know they are but Men,
Nay, ſometimes weak ones too; the Crowd indeed,
Who kneel before the Image, not the God,
Worſhip the Deity their Hands have made.
The Name of *Artaban* will be as great
As that of *Cyrus*, when he ſhall poſſeſs
(As ſure he ſhall) his Throne.

Mem. Ha! What means he!
This Villain Prieſt! but hold my Rage a little,
And learn Diſſimulation; I'll try him farther. [*Aſide.*
You talk in Riddles, when you name a Throne,
And *Artaban*; the Gods, who portion out
The Lots of Princes as of private Men,
Have put a Bar between his Hopes and Empire.

Mag. What Bar?

Mem. The beſt, an Elder Brother's Claim.

Mag. That's eaſily remov'd, the King their Father
On juſt and weighty Reaſons has decreed
His Scepter to the younger; add to this,
The joint Concurrence of our *Perſian* Lords,
Who only want your Voice to make it firm.

Mem. Can I? Can they? Can any honeſt Hand,
Join in an Act like this? Is not the Elder
By Nature pointed out for Preference?
Is not his Right inroll'd amongſt thoſe Laws
Which keep the World's vaſt Frame in beauteous Order?
Ask thoſe thou nameſt but now, what made them Lords?
What Titles had they had, if Merit only
Could have conferr'd a Right? if Nature had not
Strove hard to thruſt the worſt deſerving firſt,
And ſtampt the noble Mark of Elderſhip
Upon their baſer Mettal?

Mag. Sure there may be
Reaſons, of ſo much Power and cogent Force,
As may even ſet aſide this Right of Birth;
If Sons have Rights, yet Fathers have 'em too.
'Twere an invidious Task to enter into
The Inſolence, and other Faults, which mov'd
Royal *Arſaces*, to a juſt Diſpleaſure
Againſt his Eldeſt Son Prince *Artaxerxes*.

Mem. Ha! dare not for thy Life, I charge thee dare not
To brand the ſpotleſs Virtue of my Prince
With falſhoods of moſt baſe and damn'd contrivance,
I tell thee, envious Prieſt, ſhould the juſt Gods
Require ſevere Account of thy paſt Life,

And charge remembrance to diſpoſe thy Crimes,
In rank and hideous Order to thy View,
Horror and Guilt of Soul would make thee mad.

Mag. You take the matter farther than I meant it;
My Friendſhip only aims at your Advantage,
Would point you out a way to Peace and Honour,
And in return of this, your Rage unkindly
Loads me with Injuries.

Mem. Away! I cannot bear thy baſe diſſembling,
My honeſt Soul diſdains thee and thy Friendſhip.
How haſt thou dar'd to think ſo vilely of me;
That I would condeſcend to thy mean Arts,
And traffick with thee for a Princes Ruin;
A Prince! the Joy and Honour of Mankind,
As much ſuperiour to the reſt of Kings,
As they themſelves are above common Men,
And is the very Image of the Gods,
Wer't thou not priviledg'd, like Age and Women,
My Sword ſhould reach thee, and revenge the Wrong
Thy Tongue has done his Fame.

Mag. Ungrateful Lord!
Would'ſt thou invade my Life, as a return
For proffer'd Love? But let th' event declare
How great a good by me ſincerely offer'd,
Thy dull Romantick Honour has refus'd.
And ſince I have diſcharg'd the Debt I ow'd
To former Friendſhip, if the Gods hereafter
Send Ruin down, and plague thee with Confuſion,
Remember me in vain, and curſe thy Folly. [*Ex.* Mag.

Mem. No, my Remembrance treaſures honeſt Thoughts,
And holds not things like thee; I ſcorn thy Friendſhip;
And would not owe my Life to ſuch a Villain;
But thou art hardly Saint enough to prophecy.
Were all thy Tribe like thee, it might well ſtartle
Our Lay unlearned Faith, when thro' ſuch Hands
The Knowledge of the Gods is reach'd to Man.
But thus thoſe Gods inſtruct us, that not all
(Who like Intruders thruſt into their Service,
And turn the Holy Office to a Trade,)
Participate their ſacred Influence.
This then is your own Cauſe, ye awful Powers,
Revenge your ſelves, your violated Altars,
That thoſe who with unhallow'd Hands approach,
May tremble at your Juſtice. [*Ex.* Memnon.

SCENE

SCENE II. *The Palace.*

Enter the Queen, Artaban, Mirza, Magas, *and Attendants.*

Artab. My Brother then is come
Mirz. My Lord, I ſaw him,
With him old haughty *Memnon*; as they paſt,
With fierce Diſdain they view'd the gazing Crowd,
And with dumb Pride ſeem'd to neglect that Worſhip
Which yet they wiſht to find; this way they move,
'Tis ſaid to ask an Audience of the King.
Qu. Mirza, 'tis well, I thank thy timely Care;
Here will we face this Storm of Inſolence,
Nor fear the noiſy Thunder, let it rowl,
Then burſt, and ſpend at once its idle Rage.
Artab. Why meet we thus like wrangling Advocates,
To urge the Juſtice of our Cauſe with Words?
I hate this Parle, 'tis tame; if we muſt meet,
Give me my Arms, and let us ſtake at once
Our Rights of Merit and of Elderſhip,
And prove like Men our Title.
Mirz. 'Twere unſafe,
They come ſurrounded by a Croud of Friends,
To ſtrike thro' theſe were dangerous and raſh,
Fate waits for 'em elſewhere with certain Ruine;
From *Mirza*'s Hand expect it.
Qu. Be it ſo:
Auſpicious Sage, I truſt thee with my Fortune,
My Hopes of Greatneſs, do thou guide 'em all,
For me and for thy ſelf. My Son give way,
Nor let thy haſty Youth diſturb with out-rage
The preſent neceſſary Face of Peace;
Occaſions great and glorious will remain
Worthy thy Arms and Courage.
Artab. I obey;
And willingly reſign th' unmanly Task,
Words are indeed nour Province,
Mirz. My Royal Miſtreſs,
Prepare to meet with more than brutal Fury
From the fierce Prince and *Memnon.*
Qu. Well I know
The Inſolence and native Pride of each,
With ſcurril Taunts and blackeſt Infamy
They load my Name: But let the Wretches rail,
A Woman's Vengeance waitsem.
Mirz. They are here.

Enter Artaxerxes, Memnon, *and Attendants.*

Artax. Ye tutelar Gods, who guard this Royal fabrick,
And thou, O *Oroſamades*, the Protector
Of the great *Perſian* Race. E're yet my Father,
Royal *Arſaces*, mingle with your Godheads,
Grant me once more to lay before his Feet
His eldeſt-born, his once lov'd *Artaxerxes*,
To offer my Obedience to his Age;
All that a Son can owe to ſuch a Father.
You, who with haggard Eyes ſtare wildly on me,
If (as by your Attendance here you ſeem)
You ſerve the King my Father, lead me to him.
Qu. And doſt thou wonder that Mankind ſhould ſtart,
When Paracides and Rebels, in deſpight
Of Nature, Majeſty, and Reverend Age,
With impious Force, and ruffian Violence,
Wou'd rob a King and Father of his Life;
Cut off his ſhort Remains——
Artax. Ha! ſay'ſt thou, Woman;
I prethee peace, and urge not a Reply,
I would not hold Acquaintance with thy Infamy.
Q. Ye Righteous Powers, whoſe Juſtice awes the World,
Let not your Thunders ſleep when Crimes like theſe
Stalk in the open Air.
Artax. Thy Prieſt inſtructs thee,
Elſe ſure thou hadſt not dar'd to tempt the Gods,
And trifle with their Juſtice: Canſt thou name it
And look on me? on me, whom thy curſt Arts
Have ſtrove to bar from native Right to Empire,
Made me a Stranger to a Father's Love,
And broke the Bands of Nature which once held me
The neareſt to his Heart.
Qu. Had he not Reaſon,
When thou with rebel Inſolence didſt dare
To own and to protect that hoary Ruffian; [*Pointing to* Memnon.
And in deſpight even of thy Father's Juſtice,
To ſtir the factious Rabble up to arms
For him; and make a murderer's Cauſe thy own.
Mem. I had another Name (nor ſhouldſt thou move me,
Inſulting Queen, to Words, did not Remembrance
With Horror ſting my Soul for *Tiribaſus*,
Thy murder'd *Tiriabſus*) when by my fatal Orders,
And by his own high Courage urg'd he fell,

To

To make thy way to guilty Greatneſs eaſie.
I thought him then a Traytor (for thy Arts
Had taught the Royal Mandate ſo to call him)
Too big for publick Juſtice, and on that Pretence
Conſented to the Snare, that catcht his Life;
So my obedient Honeſty was made
The Pander to thy Luſt and black Ambition.
Except the Guilt of that accurſed Day,
In all my Iron Years of Wars and Danger,
From blooming Youth down to decaying Age,
My Fame ne're knew a Stain of foul Diſhonour,
And if thou make me guilty think what thou art,
The Cauſe and the Contriver of that Miſchief
Qu. What nameſt thou *Tiribuſus*, be his Guilt
Forgotten with his Memory. Think on *Cleander*,
And let the Furies that enquire for Blood,
Stir Horror up, and bittereſt Remorſe,
To gnaw thy anxious Soul. Oh great *Cleander*
Unworthy was thy Fate, thou firſt of Warriors,
To fall beneath a baſe Aſſaſſian's Stab,
Whom all the thirſty Inſtruments of Death,
Had in the Fields of Battle ſought in vain.
Mem. In ſight of Heaven, and of the equal Gods,
I will avow that my Revenge was juſt;
My injur'd Honour could not ask for leſs:
Since he refus'd to do a Souldiers Juſtice,
I us'd him as I ought.
Qu. Amazing Boldneſs!
And dar'ſt thou call that Act a Souldiers Juſtice?
Didſt thou not meet him with diſſembled Friendſhip
Hiding the Rancour of thy Heart in Smiles;
When he (whoſe unſpecting Nature
Thought thee a Souldier honeſt as himſelf)
Came to the Banquet as ſecure of Peace,
By mutual Vows renew'd and in the Revel
Of that luxurious Day, forgetting Hate
And every Cauſe of ancient Animoſity,
Devoted all his Thoughts to Mirth and Friendſhip;
Then *Memnon* (at an Hour when few are Villains
The ſprightly Juice infuſing gentled Thoughts
And kindling Love ev'n in the coldeſt Breaſt,)
Unequal to him in the Face of War,
Stole on *Cleander* with a Cowards Malice,
And ſtruck him to the Heart, ——
Mem. By the ſtern God,

By *Mars*, the Patron of my honour'd Wars,
'Tis basely false. In his own drunken Brawl
The Boaster fell. I bore his lavish Tongue,
Nor thought him worth my Sword, till (his cold Temper
Warm'd with the Wine he dar'd me to the Combat,
Then pleas'd to meet him in that Fit of Valour,
I took him at his Word, (and with my Sword
Drawn against his in equal Opposition)
I kill'd him while it lasted.

Artax. Cease we, my Friend,
This Womens War of railing, when they talk,
Men should be still, and let Noise tire it self.
I came to find a Father, tho' my Fears
Suggest the worst of Evils to my Thoughts,
And make me dread to hear *Arsaces* Fate.
Lead, *Memnon*, to the Presence.

Qu. Prince, you pass not;
Guards keep the Door; the King your Father lives——

Aatax. Ha!——if he lives, why lives he not to me?
Why am I thus shut out and banisht from him;
Why are my Veins rich with his Royal Blood?
Why did he give me Life, if not to serve him?
Forbid me not to wait upon his Bed,
And watch his sickly Slumbers, that my Youth
May with its Service glad his drooping Age,
And his cold Hand may bless e're he dye.
Nay, be a Queen, and rob me of his Crown,
But let me keep my Right to filial Piety.

Qu. Well hast thou urg'd the specious Name of Duty
To hide deform'd Rebellion hast thou not
With thy false Arts poyson'd his People's Loyalty?
What meant thy pompous Progress thro' the Empire?
Thy vast Profusion to the Factious Nobles,
Whose Interest sways the Croud, and stirs up Mutiny?
Why did thy haughty, fierce, disdainful Soul
Stoop to the meanest Arts which catch the Vulgar?
Herd with 'em, fawn upon 'em, and caress 'em;
Appeal to them, to them relate thy Wrongs,
And make them Judges of thy Father's Justice?
Thy cruel and unnatural Lust of Power
Have sunk thy Father more than all his Years,
And made him wither in a green old Age.

Artax. False all as Hell: Nor had I arm'd my Friends
But to defend that Right——

Qu. Dost thou not come,

Impatient of Delay to haſten Fate?
To bring that Death, the lingering Diſeaſe
Would only for a Day or two defer.
Artax. I hear thee, and diſdain thy little Malice,
That dares to ſtain my Virtue with a Crime
It views with moſt Abhorrence; but Reproach
Is loſt on thee, ſince Modeſty with all
The Vertues that adorn thy Sex is fled.
Qu. Audacious Rebel!
Artax. Infamous Adultreſs!
Stain of my Fathers Bed of his Throne!
Artab. Villain! thou ly'ſt! oh Madam give me way,
[*To the Queen, who holds him, drawing his Sword.*
Whatever bars my Fury calls me baſe,
Unworthy of the Honour of your Son.
Qu. Hold *Artaban!* My Honour ſuffers not
From his lewd Breath, nor ſhall thy Sword prophane,
With Brawls of Blood the Reverence of this Place,
To Peace and ſacred Majeſty devoted.
Artax. Ha! Who art thou? [*To* Artab.
Artab. The Son of great *Arſaces.*
Artax. No! 'tis falſe! thy forging Mothers damn'd Contrivance
Seek for thy Father in that plotting Fellow,
The Hero's Race diſclaims thee. Why doſt thou frown,
And knit thy boyiſh Brow? Doſt thou dare ought
Worthy the Rank of the Divine *Arſacides?*
If ſo, come forth break from that Womans Arms,
And meet me with thy good Sword like a Man.
Artab. Yes! *Artaxerxes,* yes! thou ſhalt be met:
The mighty Gods have held us in the Balance,
And one of us is doom'd to ſink for ever.
Nor can I bear a long Delay of Fate,
But wiſh the great Deciſion were ev'n now
Proud and Ambitious Prince, I dare like thee,
All that is great and glorious. Like thine,
Immortal Thirſt of Empire fires my Soul,
My Soul, which of ſuperiour Power impatient,
Diſdains thy Elderſhip; therefore in Arms
(Which gives the nobleſt Right to Kings) I will
To Death diſpute with thee the Throne of *Cyrus.*
Artax. Do this and thou art worthy of my Anger:
O Energy divine of great Ambition,
That can inform the Soul of beardleſs Boys,
And ripen 'em to Men in ſpite of Nature.
I tell thee Boy, that Empire is a Cauſe,

For which the Gods might wage Immortal War.
Then let my Soul exert her utmoſt Vertue,
And think at leaſt thou art *Arſaces* Son,
That the Idea of thy fancy'd Father
May raiſe and animate my leſſer Genius,
And make thee fit to meet my Arm in Battel.

Artab. Oh doubt not but my Soul is charm'd with Greatneſs,
So much it rivals even the Joy of Knowledge
And ſacred Wiſdom what makes Gods divine,
But Power and Science infinite?
Hear only this our Father preſt by Age,
And a long train of Evils which that brings,
Languiſhes in the laſt Extremes of Life:
Since thou wouldſt blot my Birth with baſe Diſhononr,
Be this my Proof of filial Piety,
While yet he lives ceaſe we our Enmity;
Nor let the hideous Noiſe of War diſturb
His parting Soul.

Artax. I take thee at thy Word:
Let his Remains of Life be Peace betwixt us,
And after thet let all our time be War.
Remember when we meet, ſince one muſt fall,
Who Conquers and Survives, ſurvives to Empire. [*Exeunt ſeverally,* *Queen and* Artab. Artax. Mem. *cum ſuis*

Manent Mirza *and* Magas.

Mirz. Moſt fortunate Event! which gives us more
Than even our Wiſhes could have askt. This Truce
Gives lucky Opportunity for thinking;
Twill lull theſe Thoughtleſs Heroes to Security.

Mag. Th' approaching Feſtival will more confirm it:
Of all thoſe ſacred Times which heretofore
Religion has diſtinguiſht from the reſt,
And to the Service of the Gods devoted,
This has been ſtill moſt venerable held;
Among the Vulgar, Toil and Labour ceaſes
With Chaplets crown'd, they dance to the ſhrill Pipe,
And in their Songs invoke thoſe milder Deities,
That ſoften anxious Life with Peace and Pleaſure;
Slaves are enfranchis'd, and inveterate Foes
Forget, or at the leaſt ſuſpend their Hate,
And meet like Friends. Pernicious Diſcord ſeems
Out rooted from out more than Iron Age:
The Gods are worſhipt with unuſual Reverence,
Since none, not ev'n our Kings, approach their Temples
With any Mark of Wars deſtructive Rage,

But

But Sacrifice unarm'd.
Mirz. A lncky Thought
Is in my Mind at once compleatly form'd,
Like *Grecian Pillas* in the Head of *Jove*.
When *Memnon*, *Artaxerxes*, and their Friends,
Shall, in obedience to the Holy Rites,
To morrow at the Altars bow unarm'd,
Orchanes with a Party of the Guards,
Who in my Palace ſhall this Night be plac'd,
May at that privaie Door which opens into
The Temple, ruſh at once, and ſeize 'em all.
The Heads once ſafe, the mean and heartleſs Crowd
With Eaſe may be diſperſt.
Mag. What you propoſe
Wears a ſucceſsful Face, were it as innocent:
An act of ſinch outrageous Prophanation,
May ſhock the Thoughts ev'n of our cloſeſt Friends,
And make 'em ſtart from on abhor'd Alliance,
That draws the Vengeance of the Gods upon 'em.
Mirz. Art thou the firſt to ſtart a Doubt like that?
Art thou (who doſt inſpire their Oracles,
And teach 'em to deceive the eaſie Crowd
In doubtfnl Phraſe) afraid of thy own Gods?
In every Change they wear on thy Side ſtill,
And ſure they will not leave thee now for Trifles.
The Gods ſhall certainly befriend our Cauſe,
At leaſt not be our Foes nor will they leave
Their happy Seats (where free from Care and Pain,
Bleſt in themſelves alone of Man regardleſs,
They loll ſerene in everlaſting Eaſe)
To mind the trivial Buſineſs of our World.
Mag. But more I fear the ſuperſtitious Vulgar,
Who tho' unknowing what Religion means,
Yet nothing moves 'em more than zealous Rage
For its Defence, when they believe it violated.
Mirz. I was to blame to tax the Prieſt with Scruples,
Or think his Care of Intereſt was his Conſcience. [*Aſide.*
My Caution ſhall obviate all thy Fears;
We will give out that they themſelves deſign'd
To fire the Temple and then kill the King.
No matter tho' it ſeem not very propable,
More monſtrous Tales have oft amus'd the Vulgar.
Mag. I yield to yonr Direction, and to ſtrengthen
The Enterprize, will ſecretly diſpoſe
A Party of my own within the Temple,

To

To joyn with yours.

Mirz. It joys my Heart to think
That I ſhall glut my Vengeance on this *Memnon*:
That I ſhall ſee him ſtrive in vain, and curſe
The happy Fraud that caught him. Like a Lyon,
Who long has reign'd the Terror of the Woods,
And dar'd the boldeſt Huntſmen to the Combat;
Till catcht at length within ſome hidden Snare,
With foaming Jaws he bites the Toils that hold him,
And roars and rowls his fiery Eyes in vain?
While the ſurrounding Swains at Pleaſure wound him,
And make his Death their Sport.
Thus Wit ſtill gets the Maſtery o're Courage.
Long time unmatcht in War the Hero ſhone,
And mighty Fame in Fields of Battle won;
Till one fine Project of the Stateſman's Brain
Bereaves him of the Spoils his Arms did gain,
And renders all his boaſted Proweſs vain. [*Exeunt.*

ACT III. SCENE I. *A Garden belonging to* Mirza's *Palace.*

Cleone is diſcover'd lying on a Bank of Flowers, *Beliza* attending.

SONG, *By* B. Stote, *Eſq;*

UPON a ſhady Bank repos'd,
Philanthe, amorous, young, and fair,
Sighing to the Groves diſclos'd
The Story of her Care.

The Vocal Groves give ſome Relief,
While they her Notes Return,
The Waters murmur o're her Grief,
And Eccho ſeems to mourn.

A Swain that heard the Nymph complain,
In pity of the Fair,
Thus kindly ſtrove to cure her Pain,
And eaſe her Mind of Care.

'Tis

'Tis juſt that Love ſhould give you reſt,
From Love your Torments came;
Take that warm Cordial to your Breaſt,
And meet a kinder Flame.

How wretched muſt the Woman prove,
Beware, fair Nymph, beware,
Whoſe Folly ſcorns anothers Love,
And courts her own Deſpair.

Cleo. Oh Love! Thou Bane of an unhappy Maid!
Still art thou buſie at my panting Heart?
Still doſt thou melt my Soul with thy ſoft Images,
And make my Ruine pleaſing? Fondly I try
By Gales of Sighs and Floods of ſtreaming Tears,
To vent my Sorrows, and aſſwage my Paſſions.
Still freſh Supplies renew th' exhauſted Stores.
Love reigns my Tyrant, to himſelf alone
He vindicates the Empire of my Breaſt,
And baniſhes all Thoughts of Joy for ever.
Bel. Why are you ſtill thus cruel to your ſelf?
Why do you feed and cheriſh the Diſeaſe,
That preys on your dear Life? How can you hope
To find a Cure for Love in ſolitude?
Why rather chuſe you not to ſhine at Court?
And in a thouſand gay Diverſions there,
To loſe the Memory of this wretched Paſſion?
Cleo. Alas! *Beliza*, thou haſt never known
The fatal Power of a reſiſtleſs Love?
Like that avenging Guilt that haunts the Impious,
In vain we hope by flying to avoid it.
In Courts and Temples it purſues us ſtill,
And in the loudeſt Clamours will be heard:
It grows a Part of us, lives in our Blood,
And every beating Pulſe proclaims its Force.
Oh! think not then that I can ſhun my ſelf;
The Grave can only hide me from my Sorrows.
Bel. Allow me then at leaſt to ſhare your Griefs;
Companions in Misfortunes make 'em leſs;
And I could ſuffer much to make you eaſie.
Cleo. Sit by me, gentle Maid, and while I tell
A wretched Tale of unreguarded Love,
If thou in kind Compaſſion of my Woes,
Shalt ſigh or ſhed a Tear for my miſhap,

My greateful eyes ſhall pay it back with intereſt.
Help me to rail at my too eaſie heart,
That raſhly entertain'd this fatal gueſt:
And you, my eyes! why were you ſtill impatient
Of any other ſight but *Artaxerxes?*
Why did you make my Womans heart acquainted
With all the thouſand graces and perfections,
That dreſs the lovely Hero up for Conqueſt?

Bel. Had you oppos'd this paſſion in its infancy,
E're time had given it ſtrength, it might have dy'd.

Cleo. That was the fatal Error that undid me:
My Virgin thoughts, and unexperienc'd Innocence,
Found not the danger till it was too late.
And tho when firſt I ſaw the charming Prince,
I felt a pleaſing motion at my heart,
Short breathing ſighs heav'd in my panting breaſt,
The mounting blood flusht in my glowing face,
And dy'd my cheeks with more than uſual bluſhes,
I thought him ſure the wonder of his kind,
And wiſht my fate had given me ſuch a Brother:
Yet knew not that I lov'd, but thought that all
Like me, beheld and bleſt him for his Excellence.

Bel. Sure never hopeleſs Maid was curſt before
With ſuch a wretched paſſion; all the Gods
Join to oppoſe your happineſs; 'tis ſaid
This day the Prince ſhall wed the fair *Ameſtris.*

Cleo. No, my *Beliza* I have never known
The pleaſing thoughts of hope: Certain diſpair
Was born at once, and with my love encreas'd.

Bel. Think you the Prince has e're perceiv'd your thoughts?

Cleo. Forbid it all ye chaſter powers, that favour
The modeſty and Innocence of Maids:
No, till my death no other breaſt but mine
Shall e're participate the fatal ſecret.
O could I think that he had ever known
My hidden flame, ſhame and confuſion
Would force my Virgin ſoul to leave her manſion,
And certain Death enſue.
Thou name'ſt the fair *Ameſtris*, didſt thou not?

Bel. Madam, I did.

Cleo. I envy not her happineſs,
Tho ſure few of our Sex are bleſt like her
In ſuch a Godlike Lord.
Would I had been a man! With honour then I might have fought his friendſhip!

Perhaps from long experience of my faith,
He might have lov'd me better than the reſt.
Amidſt the dangers of the horrid War,
Still had I been the neareſt to his ſide;
In Courts and Triumphs ſtill had ſhar'd his joys,
Or when the ſportful Chace had call'd us forth,
Together had we cheer'd our foaming Steeds,
Together preſt the Savage o're the plain.
And when o're labour'd with the pleaſing toil,
Stretcht on the verdant ſoil had ſlept together?
But whither does my roving fancy wander?
Theſe are the ſick dreams of fantaſtick Love.
So in a Calenture, the Sea man fancies
Green Fields and Flowry Meadows on the Ocean,
Till leaping in, the wretch is loſt for ever,

Bel. Try but the common Remedies of Love,
And let a ſecond flame expel the firſt.

Cleo. Impoſſible; as well thou mayſt imagine,
When thou complainſt of heat at ſcorching noon,
Another Sun ſhall riſe to ſhine more kindly,
Believe me, my *Beliza*, I am grown
So fond of the deluſion that has charm'd me,
I hate the officious hand that offers cure.

Bel. Madam, Prince *Artaban.*

Cleo. My cruel Stars!
Do you then envy me my very ſolitude;
But death, the wretches only remedy,
Shall hide me from your hated Light for ever.

Enter Artaban.

Artab. Ah! Lovely Mourner, ſtill! ſtill wilt thou blaſt
My eager Love with unauſpicious Tears?
While at thy Feet I kneel, and ſue for pity,
Or juſtly of thy cold regards complain,
Still wilt thou only anſwer me with ſighs?

Cleo. Alas! my Lord, what anſwer can I give?
If ſtill I entertain you with my grief,
Pity the temper of a wretched Maid,
By nature ſad, and born the child of ſorrow.
In vain you aſk for happineſs from me,
Who want it for my ſelf.

Art. Can blooming Youth,
And Virgin Innocence, that knows not guilt,
Know any cauſe for grief?

Cleo. Do but ſurvey
The miſerable State of humane kind,
Where Wretches are the general Encreaſe,
And tell me if there be not Cauſe for Grief.
Art. Such Thoughts as theſe, my fair Philoſopher,
Inhabit wrinkled Cheeks, and hollow Eyes;
The Marks which Years ſet on the wither'd Sage;
The gentle Goddeſs Nature wiſely has
Allotted other Cares for Youth and Beauty.
The God of Love ſtands ready with his Torch
To light it at thy Eyes, but ſtill in vain,
For e're the Flame can catch 'tis drown'd in Tears.
Cleo. Oh! name not Love, the worſt of all Misfortunes,
The common Ruin of my eaſie Sex,
Which I have ſworn for ever to avoid,
In Memory of all thoſe hapleſs Maids,
That Love has plung'd in unexampled Woes.
Artab. Forbear to argue, with that Angel Face,
Againſt the Paſſion thou wert form'd to raiſe.
Alas! thy frozen Heart has only known
Love in Reverſe, not taſted of its Joys;
The Wiſhes, ſoft Deſires, and pleaſing Pains,
That centre all in moſt extatick Bliſs.
Oh, lovely Maid, miſ-pend no more that Treaſure
Of Youth and Charms, which laviſh Nature gives;
The *Paphian* Goddeſs frowns at thy Delay;
By her fair ſelf and by her Son ſhe ſwears,
Thy Beauties are devoted to her Service.
No! now ſhe ſhoots her fires into my Breaſt,
She urges my Deſires, and bids me ſeize thee, [*Taking her Hand, and kiſſing it.*
And bear thee as a Victim to her Altar,
Then offer up ten thouſand thouſand Joys,
As an amends for all thy former Coldneſs.
Cleo. Forbear, my Lord; or I muſt ſwear to fly
For ever from your Sight.
Artab. Why doſt thou frown?
And damp the riſing Joy within my Breaſt?
Art thou reſolv'd to force thy gentle Nature,
Compaſſionate to all the World beſide,
And only to me cruel? Shall my Vows,
Thy Fathers Interceſſion all be vain?
Cleo. Why do you urge my Fathers fatal Power,
To curſe you with a ſad unlucky Bride?
Caſt round your Eyes on our gay Eaſtern Courts,
Where ſmiling Beauties, born to better Fates,

Give joy to the Beholders.
There bleſs ſome happy Princeſs with your Vows,
And leave the poor *Cleone* to her Sorrows.

Artab. What Queens are thoſe, of moſt celeſtial Form,
Whoſe Charms can drive thy Image from my Heart?
Oh were they caſt in Natures faireſt Mold,
Brighter than *Cynthia*'s ſhining train of Stars,
Kind as the ſofteſt ſhe that ever claſpt
Her Lover, when the Bridal Night was paſt;
I ſwear I would prefer thee, O *Cleone*
With all thy Scorn and cold Indifference,
Would chooſe to languiſh and to dye for thee,
Much rather than be bleſt, and live for them.

Cleo. Oh Prince, it is too much; nor am I worthy
The Honour of your Paſſion, ſince 'tis fixt
By certain and unalterable Fate,
That I can never yield you a Return:
My Thoughts are all to chaſte *Diana* vow'd,
And I have ſworn to die her Virgin Votary.

Artab. Impoſſible! thou canſt not give away
Mine and thy Fathers Right, even to the Gods;
Diana will diſown the unjuſt Donation,
Nor favour ſuch an Injury to Love.
To every Power divine I will appeal,
Nor ſhall thy Beauty bribe 'em to be partial:
Their Altars now expect us; Come, fair Saint,
And if thou wilt abide their righteous Doom,
Their Juſtice muſt decree my Happineſs,
Reward my Sufferings, and my Flame approve,
For they themſelves have felt the Pow'r of Love. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *The Temple of the Sun.*

Enter Artaxerxes, Ameſtris, *and Attendants.*

Art. 'Tis done! 'Tis done! oh let me find ſome way
To tell the mighty Joy that fills my Breaſt,
Leſt I grow mad with height of furious Bliſs.
The holy Prieſt has ty'd the ſacred Knot,
And my *Ameſtris* now is all my own.
Oh thou ſoft Charmer! thou excelling Sweetneſs!
Why art thou not tranſported all like me:
I ſwear thou doſt not love thy *Artaxerxes*,
If thou art calm in this Exceſs of Happineſs.

Ameſt. Alas! my Lord! my panting Heart yet trembles
In vaſt Suſpence between unruly Joys

And

And chilling fears; ſomewhat methinks there is
That checks my ſoul, and ſays I was too bold
To quit the pleaſures of my Virgin ſtate,
To barter 'em for cares and anxious love.
Artax. Theſe are the fears which wait on every Bride,
And only ſerves for preludes to her joys;
Short ſighs, and all thoſe motions of thy heart,
Are Nature's call, and kindle warm deſires;
Soon as the friendly Goddeſs of the night,
Shall draw her vail of darkneſs o're thy bluſhes,
Theſe little cold unneceſſary doubts,
Shall fly the circle of my folding arms:
And when I preſs thee trembling to my boſom,
Thou ſhalt confeſs (if there be room for words,
Or ev'n for thoughts) that all thoſe thoughts are bliſs.
Ameſt. Yet ſurely mine are more than common fears;
For oh! my Prince, when my foreboding heart
Surveys the uncertain ſtate of humane joys,
How ſecretly the malice of our fate
Unſeen purſues, and often blaſts our happineſs
In full ſecurity; I juſtly dread,
Leſt death or parting, or ſome unſeen accident,
Much worſe, if poſſible, then each of theſe,
Should curſe us more than ever we were bleſt.
Artax. Doubt not the Gods, my Fair! whoſe righteous power
Shall favour and protect our vertuous Loves.
If ſtill thou apprehendſt approaching danger,
Let us make haſte, and ſnatch th' uncertain joy,
While fate is in our power.
Now let us ſtart, and give a looſe to Love;
Feaſt ev'ry ſence with moſt luxurious pleaſure,
Improve our minutes, make 'em more than years,
Than ages, and ev'n live the life of Gods:
If after this, death or ill fortune comes,
It cannot injure us, ſince we already
Have liv'd, and been before-hand with our fate.
Ameſt. Oh let me eaſe at once my tender heart,
And tell my deareſt Lord my worſt of fears:
There is an ill which more than death I dread;
Should you, by time and long fruition ſated,
Grow faithleſs, and forget the loſt *Ameſtris*;
Forget that everlaſting truth you vow'd,
Tho ſure I ſhould not publickly complain
Nor to the Gods accuſe my perjur'd Prince,
Yet my ſoft ſoul would ſink beneath the weight.

I ſhould grow mad, and curſe my very being,
And wiſh I ne'er had been, or not been lov'd.
Artax. Doſt thou?——when every happier Star ſhines for us,
And with propitious Influence gilds our fortune,
Doſt thou invent fantaſtick forms of danger,
And fright thy ſoul with things that are impoſſible?
Now by the Potent God of Love, I ſwear
I will have ample vengeance for thy doubts.
My ſoft complaining Fair, ſhalt thou not pay me
In Joys too fierce for thought, for theſe ſuſpicions.
The bands which hold our Love are knit by fate,
Nor ſhall decaying time or nature looſe 'em.
Beyond the limits of the ſilent Grave,
Love ſhall ſurvive, immortal as our beings,
And when at once we climb yon azure Skies,
We will be ſhown to all the bleſt above,
For the moſt conſtant pair that e're deſerv'd
To mingle with their Stars.
Ameſt. 'Tis true! 'tis true!
Nor ought I to ſuſpect thee, O my Hero!
The Gods have form'd thee for the neareſt pattern
Of their own excellence and perfect truth.
Oh let me ſink upon thy gentle boſome,
And bluſhing tell how greatly I am bleſt.
Forgive me Modeſty, if here I vow
That all the pleaſures of my Virgin ſtate
Were poor and trifling to the preſent rapture.
A gentle warmth invades my glowing breaſt,
And while I fondly gaze upon thy face,
Ev'n thought is loſt in exquiſite delight.
Artax. Oh thou delicious perfect Angel Woman!
Thou art too much for mortal ſence to bear:
The Vernal bloom and fragrancy of Spices
Wafted by gentle winds, are not like thee.
From thee, as from the *Cyprian* Queen of Love,
Ambroſial odours flow, my every faculty
Is charm'd by thee, and drinks Immortal pleaſure.
Oh glorious God of day fly ſwiftly forward,
And to thy Siſters rule reſign the world:
Nor haſte to riſe again, but let the night
Long bleſs me with her ſtay; that thy return
At morn may find me happieſt of my kind.

Enter

Enter Memnon.

My Father! is there an Increaſe of Joy?
What can ye give, ye Gods, to make it more?
Mem. Ye Bleſſings of my Age: Whom when I view,
The Memory of former Woes is loſt.
Oh Prince! Well has this glorious Day repay'd
My Youth and Blood ſpent in *Arſaces* Service.
Nor had the Gods indulg'd my vaineſt Wiſhes,
Durſt I have askt for ſuch a Son as you are.
But I am roughly bred, in Words unknowing,
Nor can I phraſe my Speech in a apt Expreſſion,
To tell how much I love and honour you.
Might I but live to fight one Battel for you,
Tho' with my Life I bought the Victory,
Tho' my old batter'd Trunk were hew'd to pieces,
And ſcatter'd o're the Field, yet ſhould I bleſs
My Fate, and think my Years wound up with Honour.
Art. Doubt not, my noble Father but even yet
A large remain of Glory is behind.
When civil Diſcord ſhall be reconcil'd,
And all the Noiſe of Faction huſht to Peace,
Rough *Greece*, alike in Arts and Arms ſevere,
No more ſhall brand the *Perſian* Name with ſoftneſs.
Athens and *Sparta* wondring ſhall behold us,
Strict in our Diſcipline, undaunted, patient
Of Wars ſtern toil, and dread our hoſtile Vertue.
Thoſe ſtubborn Commonwealths, that proudly dare
Diſdain the glorious Monarchs of the Eaſt;
Shall pay their Homage to the Throne of *Cyrus*.
And when with Lawrels cover'd we return,
My Love ſhall meet, and ſmiling bleſs our Triumph,
While at her Feeet I lay the Scepters of the World.
Mem. Oh glorious Theme! By Heaven it fires my Age,
And kindles Youth again in my cold Veins.
Art. Ha! *Mirza* and the Queen! retire my fair,
Ungentle Hate and brawling Rage ſhall not
Diſturb the Peace, to which this happy Day
Is doubly ſacred. Forward, to the Altar.

[*Exeunt* Axtaxerxes, Ameſtris,
Memnon, *and Attendants.*

Enter

Enter at the other Door, Queen, Mirza, *and Attendants.*

Mirz. All are diſpos'd, and Fate but waits our Orders
For a deciding Blow.

Qu. Your Caution was
Both wiſe and faithful, not to truſt my Son
Too raſhly with a Secret of this Nature.
The Youth, tho' great of Soul, and fond of Glory,
Yet leans to the fantaſtick Rules of Honour,
Would heſitate at ſuch an Act as this,
Tho' future Empire ſhould depend upon it.

Mirz. When time ſhall add Experience to that Knowledge,
With which his early Youth is richly fraught,
He'll be convinc'd that only Fools would loſe
A Crown for notionary Principles.
Honour is the unthinking Souldier's Boaſt,
Whoſe dull Head cannot reach thoſe finer Arts,
By which Mankind is govern'd.

Qu. And yet it gives a Luſtre to the Great,
And makes the Croud adore 'em.

Mirz. Your Son ſhall reap
The whole Advantage, while we bear the Guilt:
You, Madam, when the ſacred Hymns are finiſht,
Muſt with the Prince retire; our Foes when ſeiz'd,
Within the Temple may be beſt ſecur'd,
Till you diſpoſe their Fate.

Qu. The Rites attend us, [*Solemn Muſick is heard.*
This Day my Son is Monarch of the Eaſt.

Mirz. Lend us, ye Gods, your Temples but this Day,
You ſhall be paid with Ages of Devotion,
And after this for ever undiſturb'd,
Brood o're your ſmoaking Altars.

[*Exeunt* Queen, Mirza, *and Attendants.*

SCENE II.

The Scene opening ſhews the Alter of the Sun, Magas *and ſeveral other Prieſts attending. Solemn Muſick is heard; then Enter on one ſide* Memnon, Artaxerxes, Ameſtris, *and Attendants, on the other ſide the* Queen, Mirza, Artaban, Cleone, Cleanthes, *and Attendants; they all bow towards the Altar, and then range themſelves on each ſide of the Stage, while the following Hymn is perform'd in Parts, and Chorus by the Prieſts.*

HYMN *to the* Sun, *by* W. Shippen, *Eſq;*

HAil Light that doubly glads our Sphere,
Glory and Triumph of the Year!
Hail Feſtival for ever bleſt,
By the adoring raviſht Eaſt!

Hail Mithras, *mighty Deity!*
For Fire and Air, and Earth and Sea,
From thee their Origin derive,
Motion *and* Form *from thee receive.*

When Matter *yet unacted lay,*
No ſooner thou infus'd thy Ray,
But the dull Maſs its Power obey'd,
But an harmonious World was made.

Which ſtill, when thou withdraweſt thy Beams,
And undiſtinguiſht Chaos *ſeems;*
For what are Objects without ſight?
Or Viſion when involv'd in Night?

Night is an univerſal Grave,
Where things but doubtful Beings have,
Till them thy Beams *illuminate,*
And as it were again create.

Chorus, *&c.*
Hail ſource of immaterial Fire,
That ne're begun, can ne're expire,
Whoſe Orb, with ſtreaming Glories fraught,
Dazles the ken of human Thought!

All the dependant Spheres above,
By thy Direction ſhine and move.
All Purer Beings here below,
From thy immediate Eſſence flow.

What is the Soul of Man but Light,
Drawn down from thy tranſcendant height?
What but an Intellectual Beam?
A Spark of thy immortal Flame?

For as thou ruleſt with gladſome Rays
The greater World, ſo this the leſs,
And like thy own diffuſive Soul,
Shoots Life and Vigour thro' the whole.

Since then from thee at firſt it came,
To thee, tho' clogg'd, it points its flame,
And conſcious of ſuperiour Birth,
Deſpiſes this unkindred Earth.

Chorus, *&c.*
Hail Oroſmades, *Pow'r Divine!*
Permits us to approach thy Shrine,
Permit thy Votaries to raiſe
Their grateful Voices to thy Praiſe.

Thou art the Father *of our* Kings,
The ſtem whence their high leaneage ſprings,
The Sov'reign Lord *that does maintain*
Their uncontroul'd and boundleſs Reign.

O then aſſiſt thy drooping Son,
Who long has grac'd our Perſian *Throne!*
O may he yet extend his ſway!
We yet Arſaces *Rule obey!*

Let thy viality *impart*
New Spirits to his fainting Heart;
Let him like thee (from whom he ſprung)
Be ever Active, ever Young.
Choras, *&c.*

When the Muſick is ended Memnon, Artaxerxes, *&c.* Queen, Artaban, &c. *go off as they enter'd, ſeverally: only* Mirza *comes forward, and the Scene ſhuts; he looks after* Ameſtris *going out, and then ſpeaks.*

Mirz. What means this foreign warmth within my Breaſt?
Is this a time for any thought but Vengeance?
That fatal Beauty dazles my weak Senſe,
And blaſts the Reſolution of my Soul:
My Eyes in contradiction to my Purpoſe,
Still bent to her, and drunk the Poyſon in;
While I ſtood ſtupid in Suſpence of Thought.
And now like Oyl my flaming Spirits blaze;
My Arteries, my Heart, my Brain is ſcorch't,
And I am all one Fury. Feeble *Mirza!*
Can'ſt thou give way to dotage, and become
The jeſt of Fools? No! 'tis Impoſſible:
Revenge ſhall rouſe, and with her Iron Whips
Laſh forth this lazy Ague from my Blood,
This Malady of Girls. Remember Stateſman,
Thy Fate and future Fortunes now are forming,
And ſummon all thy Counſels to their Aid;
Ev'n thy whole Soul. It wo'not be; *Ameſtris*

Still riſes uppermoſt in all my Thoughts,
The Maſter-piece of Nature. The Boy God
Laughs at my Rage, and triumph o're my Folly.
Ha! by the Gods 'tis doing! Now my Stars
Be kind and make me Maſter of my wiſh at once. [*A tumultuous Noiſe is heard.*

Enter Magas.

But ſee the Prieſt! Why doſt thou ſtare and tremble,
Have we ſucceeded, ſay; and eaſe my Fears.
Mag. My Soul is pierc'd with Horror! Every God
Seems from his Shrine to threaten us with Vengeance.
The Temple reels and all its pond'rous Roof
Nods at the Prophanation.
Mirz. Baſe and fearful!
How can thy wretched Soul conceive ſuch Monſters?
Can'ſt thou who would'ſt be great be Superſtitious?
But 'tis the Cowards Vice. Say; are our Enemies ſecur'd?
Mag. They are; the Prince, Old *Memnon* and his Daughter
Are in *Orchances* Hands, only *Tigranes*
With ſome of leſſer Note are fled.
Mirz. No matter:
Theſe are the Soul, the reſt a lifeleſs Maſs,
Not worth our Apprehenſion.
Mag. Will you ſtay,
Too meet the furious Thunder of their Rage?
Mirz. I will; thou may'ſt retire and ſummon back.
Thy ſcatter'd Spirits; Let not the Crowd ſee
Thy Fears, 'twill make the Vile and Cheap among 'em [*Exit* Mag.

Enter Artaxerxes, Memnon, *and* Ameſtris *Priſoners*, Orchances *and Guards.*

Art. Slave! Villain! Anſwer, ſay how haſt thou dar'd
To do this Inſolence?——
Orch. I know my Orders
Which from the Queen my Miſtreſs I receiv'd,
Who will avow her own Authority.
Art. Ha! from the Queen! She durſt not! 'tis impoſſible!
'Tis Sacriledge! 'tis Treaſon! 'tis Damnation.
Am I not *Artaxerxes*? Born to Empire,
The next Degree to God's. Oh thou bright Sun!
That roul'ſt above the Object of our Worſhip.
Can'ſt thou behold and not avenge thy Race?
Thy injur'd Race? if I could ought admit

Un-

Unworthy of thy great Original.
Let me be doom'd to fall this Villain's Slave,
If not!——Why am I made the Scorn of Wretches?
So much below me that they hardly ſhare
The Common Priviledge of Kind; but are
As Beaſts to Men———
Mem. See where the Maſter Villain ſtands! unmov'd
And harden'd in Impiety, he laughs
At the fictitious Juſtice of the God's,
And thinks their Thunder has not Wings to reach him;
But know the Joy thy Triumph brings is ſhort,
My Fate (if the God's govern) or at leaſt
My Mind's beyond thy reach, and ſcorns thy Malice.
Mirz. Dull valiant Fool thy Ruin is the leaſt
The moſt ignoble Triumph of my Wit.
Cleander's Blood asks for ſubſtantial Vengeance,
And when the Thought that Labours in my Breaſt
Appears in Action, thou ſhalt know the Cauſe
Why I remain to view thy hated Face,
That blaſts me with its Preſence; thou ſhalt know it
And curſe thy ſelf, curſe the ill-omen'd Day
That gave the Birth, renouncing all the God's,
Thy ſelf of them renounc'd, ſhalt ſink to Hell
In bittereſt Pangs and mingle with the Furies.
Mem. Unhallow'd Dog, thou ly'ſt! The utmoſt Force
Of all thy ſtudy'd Malice cannot move me
And if the God's in Tryal of my Virtue
Can yeild my Life up to thy Hangman's Mercy;
I'll ſhew thee with what eaſe the Brave and Honeſt
Can put off Life till thou ſhalt damn thy Arts,
Thy wretched Arts, and Impotence of Malice.
Mirz. Reſt well aſſur'd, thou ſhalt have Cauſe to try
The Philoſophick Force of paſſive Vertue.
Art. Oh death to Greatneſs! Can we fall ſo low
To be the ſlaviſh Objects of his Mirth?
Shall my juſt Rage and violated Honour
Play the Buffoon and Miniſter to laughter?
Down, down my ſwelling Heart, hide thy Reſentments,
Nor proſtitute the ruffled Majeſty
Of injur'd Princes to the gazing Crowd,
My Face ſhall learn to cover the Emotion
My wounded Soul endures. Ha! my *Ameſtris*?
My Love! my Royal Bride! the ſpoiler Grief
Defaces every Feature, like the Deluge
That rais'd the Beauties of the firſt Creation;

I cannot bear it Villains give me way!

[*He breaks from the Guard that hold him and catches hold of* Ameſtris.

Oh let me hold thee in my throbbing Boſom,
And ſtrive to hide thy Sorrows from my ſight, ——
I cannot ſee thy Griefs; and yet I want
The Power to bring Relief.

Ameſ. Ah! No my Prince!
There are no Remedies for Ills like ours;
My helpleſs Sex by nature ſtands expos'd
To all the Wrongs and Injuries of Fortune,
Defenceleſs in my ſelf, you were my Refuge,
You are my Lord to whom ſhould I complain,
Since you cannot redreſs me: were you not
The Honour, Joy, and Safety of *Ameſtris?*
For you alone I liv'd, with you alone
I could be happy, oh my *Artaxerxes!*
One influence guides our conſenting Stars,
And ſtill together are we bleſt or curſt.

Mirz. With a malignant Joy my Ears drink in,
Hear each Harmonious accent every glance,
Goes to my Heart and ſtirs, alternate Motions
Of Heat and Cold, a lazy Pleaſure now
Th ills all my Veins, anon Deſire grows Hot,
And my old Sinews ſhrink before the Flame.

Artax. Go on! And charm me with thy Angels Voice,
Sooth and aſſwage the Fury in my Breaſt,
That urges me to unbecoming Paſſion,
My Rage grows cool amidſt thy ſoft Complainings,
And though thou talk'ſt of Woes of Death and Ruin,
'Tis Heaven to hear thee.

Ameſ. Since this is all our wretched Conſolation,
Let us indulge our Grief, till by long uſe,
It grows Habitual, and we loſe the Pain.
Here, on the marble Pavement will we ſit,
Thy Head upon my Breaſt; and if remembrance
Of cruel Wrongs, ſhall vex thy noble Heart,
The Murmer of my Sighs ſhall charm the Tumult,
And Fate ſhall find us Calm; nor will the Gods,
Who here inhabit and behold our Sufferings,
Delay to end our Woes in Immorrality.

Artax. Ha! ſay'ſt thou? God's! Yes certain there are God's,
To whom my Youth with Reverence ſtill has bow'd,
Whoſe Care and Providence are Virtues Guard,

Think

Think then my fair they have not made us great,
And like themſelves for miſerable ends.
Mirz. God's might behold her and forget their Wiſdom, [*Aſide.*
But I delay too long! *Orchanes* lend thy Ear. [Mirz. *whiſpers* Orch. *and Ex.*
Mem. My Children! you were ſtill my Joy and Happineſs.
Why am I made your Curſe? this hated Head
To death devoted, has involv'd your Innocence
In my Deſtruction. [*Guards lay hold on* Artax. *and* Ameſtris.
Ameſ. Alas, my Father!——
Artax. Barbarous Dogs! What mean you?
Orch. Convey the Lady to Lord *Mirza*'s Palace,
'Tis the Queen's Will ſhe ſhall be there confin'd.
Artax. Thou can'ſt not mean ſo damn'd Villany!
Thou dar'ſt not! ſhal't not part us! Fate cannot do it!
Mem. Curſed Old Age, why have I liv'd to ſee this?
Orch. Force 'em aſunder.
Art. Hew off my Limbs ye Dogs! I will not loſe 'em——
Oh Devils! Death and Furies! my Wife! my lov'd *Ameſtris*—
Ameſ. My Lord! my Husband!——

Orchances *and one Party of the Guards force* Artaxerxes *and* Memnon *off one way, and the other Party bears* Ameſtris *another.*

Re-enter Mirza.

Mirz. This was moſt noble Miſchief! it ſtung home,
'Twas Luxury of Vengeance——'twas not ill
To keep aloof; theſe boiſterous Beaſts have Paws,
And might have ſcratcht: The Wife ſhould not allow
A poſſibility to Fortunes Malice.
Now to the reſt; this Prince! this Husband! dies:
To Morrows dawn brings his and *Memnon*'s Fate.
This Night let 'em deſpair, and Bann, and Rage,
And to the wooden Deities within,
Tell frantick Tales; my Hours ſhall paſs more pleaſingly;
If Love, (which yet I know not,) can give Pleaſure,
Love! What is Love? the Paſſion of a Boy,
That ſpends his time in Lazineſs and Sonnets:
Luſt is the Appetite of Man; and ſhall
Be ſated, till it loath the cloying Banquet.
The Wife are by human frailty,
To taſt theſe Pleaſures, but not dwell upon 'em;
They marr and dull the faculty of thinking;
One Night I ſafely may indulge in Riot,
'Tis Politick Lewdneſs, and aſſiſts my Vengeance;

I will grow young, and ſurfeit on her Charms,
Her luſcious Sweets; then riſing from her Arms,
The nauſeous, momentary Joy forget,
And be my ſelf again; again be Wife and Great. [*Exit* Mirz.

ACT IV. SCENE. I. *The Palace.*

Enter Artaban *and* Cleanthes.

Ar. 'TIS Baſe and Impious! Where are the Ties
Shall keep Mankind in Order? If Religion
And publick Faith be violated; 'Tis an Injury
That beards both Gods and Men; and dares their Juſtice.

Clea. The fearful Crowd already take the Alarm,
Break off their Solemn Sports, their Songs and Dances,
And wildy in tumultuous Conſort join;
Miſchief and Danger ſits in every Face,
And while they dread the Anger of the Gods,
The Wiſe who know th' Effects of popular Fury,
From them expect that Vengance which they fear.

Artab. The ſacred Power of Majeſty, which ſhould
Forbid, owns and protects the Violence;
It muſt not, ſhall not be; Who ſteals a Crown
By Arts like theſe, wears it unworthily.

Clean. The Queen your Mother, Sir! ſhe will expect
You ſhould approve that Act her Power has done.

Artab. I'll meet her as I ought, and ſhow my ſelf
Worthy the Noble Rivalſhip of Empire.

Enter the Queen, Mirza *and Attendants.*

Queen. My Son, I come to joy you of a Crown
And Glory certain now, your Fate at length,
Has maſter'd that Malignant Influence
With which it ſtruggl'd long: You are a King,
The greateſt that our *Eaſtern* World beholds,
And tho' my widow'd Bed be Cauſe for Grief,
Yet for thy Sake, my Son, I joy to ſay,
Arſaces is no more.

Artab. 'Twere vain and fooliſh,
To mourn his Death with ceremonious Sorrow;
For tho' he died the greateſt of our Race,

Yet

Yet ſince decaying Age had ſunk him low
And all the Native Majeſty was loſt,
'Twas time the Soul ſhould ſeek for Immortality,
And leave the weary Body to Enjoy
An Honourable Reſt from Care and Sickneſs:
Peace to his Aſhes, and Eternal Fame
Dwell with his Memory, while we who Live
Look back with Emulation on his Greatneſs,
And with Laborious Steps ſtrive to aſcend
That Height where once he ſat.

Qu. Thou haſt already
Attain'd the lofty Summit of his Glory;
His Throne expects thee but to ſit and fill it.

Artab. No, Madam, when the Gods chuſe worthy Subjects
On whom to place ſuch Greatneſs, they ſurround
The Glorious Prize with Toil and thorny Danger,
And bid the Man who would be Great, Dare greatly.
Be it for dull Elder Brothers to Poſſeſs
Without deſerving; Mine's a Nobler Claim,
Nor will I Taſt the Godlike Joys of Power,
Till Men and Gods with Juſtice ſhall confeſs
'Tis barely the Reward of what I meant.

Qu. What means my Son?

Artab. To Wreſtle for a Crown!

Qu. With what fantaſtick Shadow wouldſt thou ſtrive?
The Haughty Rival of thy Hopes is fallen,
He lives indeed, but 'tis to Grace thy Triumph,
And Bow before thee; then be ſwept away
Like the Remembrance of an idle Dream,
Which tho' of Yeſternight, is now forgotten.

Artab. It grieves me much to ſay, my Royal Mother,
I cannot take a Crown upon theſe Terms
Tho' even from your Hands: The Conſcious Virtue
That witneſſes within my Breaſt for Glory,
Points me to Greatneſs by the Paths of Honour,
And urges me to do as a King ought,
That would not wear his Purple as the Gift
Of impious Treachery and baſe Deceit.

Qu. Amazement turns my Senſes! Or I Dream!
For ſure thou canſt not mean ſo poor a Folly.
Haſt thou been bred in the Wiſe Arts of Empire?
Been early taught to know the Worth of Power?
And would'ſt thou looſe the Golden Opportunity
With which thy Fortune Courts thee for a Notion?

An Empty ſound of Virtue? A dry Maxim
Which Pedants have deviſ'd for Boys to Canvas?
Can my Son think ſo meanly? Go ſet free
(Since Honour bids) this Lordly Elder Brother
Bow like a Slave before him, wait his Pleaſures,
And live a dependant on his ſcanty Penſion;
He may reward thy ſervile Loyalty,
And make thee ruler of ſome petty Province
In recompence of Royalty giv'n up.

Artab. No! (Tho' I muſt confeſs I would not hold him
Caught in a Villians Snare, nor do a Murther
Unworthy of a Hang-man) yet to death
I ſtill deſie him as my Mortal Foe,
And ſince my Father's Fate diſſolves that Truce,
To which I ſtood ingag'd; 'tis War again.
Amid'ſt the ſteely Squadrons will I ſeek
This haughty Brother, by his Friends ſurrounded
And back'd with all th' Advantages of his Birth,
Then bravely prove upon him with my Sword;
He falſely brands me for a bookiſh Coward,
That Natures Error only gave him Preference,
Since Fate mean't me the King.

Qu. A Mothers Care is watchful for thy ſafety,
Elſe wer't thou loſt, thou honourable Fool;
Long might'ſt thou vainly hunt in Bloody Fields;
For that Advantage which thy willing Fortune
Now reaches to thy hands: In Battles with
Uncertain Wings the wavering Goddeſs flies,
And oft with partial hand beſtows her Favour
On Fools and thick Scull'd Heroes; ſeize her now
While She is thine, or She is loſt for Ever.

Artab. No matter, Let her fly; the Eagle Virtue
Shall ſoar beyond her and command her flight;
Fortune is not my Miſtreſs, but my Slave.
Poſterity that reads the Name of *Artaban*
In the Records of Empire, ſhall not bluſh
To think I plotted with a Knaviſh Prieſt,
The Scandal of his venerable Function.
And mark of the God's Vengeance, to betray
A Prince my Enemy; as if being Conſcious
Of leſſer worth, and of unequal Courage;
I durſt not fairly ſtrive with him for Greatneſs,
Let the abhorr'd and Impious Treachery
Obſcurely die, unknown to future Ages;

Or

Or if our Shame muſt be deliver'd down
By all the Kingly Hopes that fires my Soul,
It ſhall not paſs without a Brand of Puniſhment.
Qu. 'Tis wondrous well! Young Man you King rarely!
You mean to be renown'd for early Juſtice,
And mark your Oſtentacious Love of Virtue,
Ev'n in their Bloods, who lift you up to Power;
Perhaps we too, our ſelf muſt be Arraign'd ——
Before your puny Bar, and feel your Ax;
'Twill be a Noble Subject for your Praiſe,
And yield much Matter to declaiming Flatterers.
Artab. You, Madam, are my Mother, Nature blinds me,
And bids me ſee no Faults in her that bore me;
Thoſe other Slaves that dare ——
Qu. May be Immortal,
For ought that thou can'ſt do to cauſe their Fate.
Is not thy Power the Creature of my Favour
Which in precarious wiſe on me depending,
Exiſts by my Concurrence to its being?
Miſtaken Youth! Whoſe giddy Brain, Ambition
Has like the Fume of drunken Vapours turn'd;
Think'ſt thou that I whoſe Soul was form'd for Sway,
Would lay the Golden Reins of Empire down?
Or truſt 'em to the guidance of a Boy?
Who ſhall diſpoſe of me, or thoſe that ſerve me,
According to the dictates of Old Mortals,
His bearded Tutor gleans from muſty Authors.
Artab. Nay then 'tis time I ſhould Aſſert my ſelf,
And tho' you gave me Birth; yet from the God's
(Who made my Father be as he was, Royal,
And ſtamp't the Mark of Greatneſs on my Soul;)
I Claim my Right to Empire; may I fall
Vile and forgotten if I Ever own
Any Superiour Being but thoſe God's.
Qu. Thou rav'ſt! And haſt forgot me.
Artab. No, you are
My Mother, and a Woman, form'd to Obey;
On that Condition all Sexes Privileges
Are founded, the Creating Hand has mixt
Softneſs and Beauty in your Compoſition,
To Charm and bend the Mind of Man Impatient
Of the Ignoble Pleaſure; you were made for
The Weakneſs and Neceſſities of Nature.
Ill are your feeble Souls for Greatneſs ſuited,

Deſire of Government is Monſtrous in you.

Qu. Thou mighty Goddeſs Nature! Doſt thou hear
This Rebel Son! This inſolent Upbraider!
Still fondly Nurſt in my indulgent Boſom!
To build whoſe future Greatneſs to the Skies,
My Anxious Soul has labour'd more than when
I felt a Mothers Sorrow for his Birth,
Ungrateful Boy!——
Know Fool! That vaunt'ſt thy ſelf upon thy Manhood,
The greateſt he that rougher kind e're had,
Muſt have confeſt Woman's Superiour Wit,
And own'd our Sexes juſt Prerogative.
Did not a Mother's Fondneſs plead hard for thee.
Thy Head ſhould pay the Forfeit of thy Inſolence;
For know (Young King!) that I am Fate in *Perſia*,
And Life and Death depend upon my Pleaſure.

Art. The World would be well govern'd, ſhould the God's
Depute their Providence to Women's Care,

Qu. Yet thou art Safe! Away! Nor tempt me farther,
The Patience ev'n of God's themſelves has Limits,
Tho' they with long Forbearance view Man's Folly.
Yet if thou ſtill perſiſt to dare my Power,
Like them I may be urg'd to looſe my Vengeance,
And tho' thou wer't my Creature, ſtrike thee Dead.

Mirz. 'Beſeech you Sir, retire; the Queen your Mother
Labour's with wiſeſt Foreſight for your Good,
And is incens'd to ſee you thwart that Purpoſe.

Artab. What is the good of Greatneſs but the Power?
Madam I leave you; my own Innate Virtue
Arms me againſt your Rage Unjuſt and Impotent,
Wait but the great Succeſs my Soul divines
And you will own your little jugling Arts
Have only ſerv'd to obſtruct a while my Glory,
And Skreen this elder Brother from my Conqueſt. [*Exit* Artaban *and*

Qu. Some Envious Pow'r above, ſome Hoſtile *Demon*, Cleanthes.
Works under-hand againſt my ſtronger Genius,
And counter mines me with Domeſtick jars.
Malicious Chance! When all abroad was ſafe,
To ſtart an unſeen Danger from my ſelf!
Mirza! Did'ſt not thou mark the haughty Boy?
With what aſſuming Pride he own'd his daring?
And claim'd ſuperiority of Power?
Oh can I live and bear to be Controul'd?
To Share the Pleaſure of Supreme Command,

With

With him or any one? Oh *Artemisa*!
Did'st thou disdain subjection to a Husband,
The Proudest Title of that Tyrant Man?
And canst thou yield a Boy? A Son? By Nature
And grateful Duty to Obedience bound?

Mirz. Madam, Let me intreat you, by the God's,
To calm your just Resentments: Medling Fortune,
(Whose Malice labours to perplex the Wise,)
If not prevented, will unravel all
Those finer Arts, which we with Care have wove.
The Prince, led on by this pernicious Honour,
May set the Pris'ners free, think, if that happen,
To what a shock of Fate we stand expos'd.

Qu. 'Tis true! this foolish Honour ruine's all,
Ridiculous Notion! as if, self Interest
Were not the first and noblest Law of Nature.
Say then wise Lord, and let thy ready Wit,
Still present to it self, avert this blow.

Mirz. One Method tho' ungentle yet remains;
To remedy the Fears this Ill produces;
This Instant let a Guard confine the Prince;
E're he can gain the Means t'Effect that Mischief
He meditates against himself, and us:
To Morrow, early as the Morning dawn's
The Prisoners all shall Die; that once dispatcht,
This raging Fit of Honour will relax,
And give him leisure to consider cooly,
Th' Advantage of his Fortune.

Qu. You have Reason;
And tho' I fear his haughty Temper will
But badly brook Confinement, he must learn
To bear it as he can, perhaps 'twill bend him
And make his Youth more plyant to my Will.

Mirz. Your Orders cannot be dispatch't too soon,
Each Minute of the flying Hours is Precious.

Qu. The Eunch *Bagoas*! let him attend us,
He shall receive Instructions on the Instant.

[*Exeunt the* Queen *and* Mirza *severally.*

SCENE

SCENE II. Mirza's Palace.

Enter Cleone *in Man's Habit, with a dark Lanthorn,* Beliza *following.*

Cleo. Ye gentler Powers who View our Cares with Pity,
Lend your Compaſſion to the poor *Aneſtris*;
Oh my *Beliza*, was not thy Soul wounded,
To hear, (when now we paſt by her Apartment)
The piercing Accents of her loud Complainings?
By Heaven my aching Heart bleeds for her Sufferings.

Bel. 'Tis ſure ſhe feels the bitterereſt Pangs of Woe,
And were not all my Thoughts to you devoted,
Her Grief would deeply ſink into my Soul;
Why will you tempt alone Ten thouſand Dangers?
Your Father's and the furious Queen's Reſentments?
The Cruel Guards? And all thoſe fatal Accidents,
Which in the Horror of this Dreadful Night
Might ſhake the Reſolution of a Man?

Cleo. Prithee no more; thou know'ſt I am reſoly'd,
And all thy kind Advice is urg'd in vain.
Thy fond miſtaking Fears préſent the Danger
More dreadful than it is; this Maſter-key
Admits me thro' that Paſſage to the Temple,
By which the Guards who ſeiz'd the unhappy Prince
This Morning enter'd; that of all the reſt
Is only left unguarded, and from thence
Aſſiſted by the friendly Vail of Night,
We may Conduct him thro' my Father's Palace
In ſafety to the Street; there undiſtinguiſh'd
Amongſt the buſy diſcontented Croud,
That ſwarm in murmuring Heaps he may retire;
Nor ſhall my Father or the Queen e're know
The Pious Fraud my Love was guilty of.

Bel. Yet ſtill I fear——

Cleo. No more! Retire and leave me,
My drooping Heart ſits lighter than it's wont,
And chearfully preſages good Succeſs.

Bel. Where ſhall I wait you?

Cleo. At my own Apartment.

Bel. The Mighty Gods Protect you.

Cleo. Softly! Retire; [*Exit* Beliza.
What Noiſe was that? ——The Creature of my Fears.

In

In vain, fond Maid, would'ſt thou bely thy Sex,
Thy Coward Soul confeſſes thee a Woman,
A fooliſh, raſh, fond Woman. Where am I going?
To ſave my Godlike Hero! Oh my Heart!
It pants and trembles; ſure 'tis Joy not Fear;
The Thought has given me Courage; I ſhall ſave him,
That Darling of my Eyes. What if I fail?
Then Death is in my Reach and ends my Sorrows. [*Shewing a Dagger.*
Why do'ſt thou ſhake, my Hand? And fear to graſp
This Inſtrument of Fate? If I ſucceed,
Yet *Artaxerxes* will not live for me;
And my Deſpair will want thy friendly Aid.
Death ev'ry way ſhuts up my gloomy Proſpect.
If then there be that *Lethe* and *Eliſium*
Which Prieſts and Poets tell, to that dark Stream
My Soul of Life impatient ſhall make haſt.
One healing Draught my Quiet ſhall Reſtore,
And Love forgotten ne're diſturb me more. [*Ex.* Cleone.

SCENE III.

A Nights Scene of the Temple of the Sun.

Enter Artaxerxes *and* Memnon.

Artax. Still 'tis in vain! This idle Rage is vain!
And yet, my ſwelling Paſſions will have way;
And rend my labouring Breaſt till they find vent.
Was it for this, ye cruel Gods, you made me
Great like your ſelves, and as a King, to be
Your Sacred Image? Was it but for this?
To be Cut down, and mangled by vile Hands,
Like the falſe Object of miſtaken Worſhip!
Why rather was I not a preſant Slave?
Bred from my Birth a Drudge to your Creation,
And to my deſtin'd Load inur'd betimes?
Mem. The Malice of our Fate were not Compleat,
Had we not been by juſt Degrees, to Happineſs
Rais'd, only to be plung'd the deeper down
In an Abyſs of Woes. Early Succeſs
Met and Attended all my youthful Wars;
And when I ruſh't amidſt the dreadful Battle,
The weaker *Genij* of our *Aſian* Monarchs,

Shrunk

Shrunk from the Force of a Superior Fate;
O'er march'd they fell, and by my Sword were ſwept
Like common Beings from the glorious Field.
Then was the Day of joyous Triumph, then
My Soul was lifted high, ev'n to the Stars.
But now! What am I now? O damn'd Reverſe of Fortune!
Now when my Age would be indulg'd in Eaſe,
And Joy in Pleaſure of my former Fame,
Now I am curs'd; held at a Villain's Mercy,
My Foe's Deriſion and the Scorn of Cowards.
Artax. Oh! Torture of my Soul! damn'd racking Thought
Am not I too reſerv'd for ſervile Vaſſalage?
To be the Subject of a Boys Command?
A Boy by Nature ſet beneath my Sway?
And born to be my Slave! ſhall he triumph?
And bid me Live or Die? Shall he diſpoſe
His beardleſs Viſage to a ſcornful Smile,
And tell me that his Pleaſure is my Fate?
No! my diſdainful Soul ſhall ſtruggle out
And ſtart at once from its diſhonour'd Manſion.
Mem. Oh! Royal Thought! Nor ſhall they keep Death
Altho' it's common Means be not in reach.
Shall my Old Soldiers outſide rough and hardy,
Scarr'd o're with many an honourable Mark
Be cag'd for publick Scorn? Shall a Dog tell me
Thus didſt thou once, and now thou art my Slave;
My Foot ſhall ſpurn thee, tread upon thy Neck,
And trample in the Duſt thy Silver Hairs?
Shall I not rather choak? Hold in my Breath?
Or ſmear ſome Wall or Pillar with my Brains?
Artax. Rage or ſome God ſhall ſave us from Diſhonour
But oh! my Father! Can we take our flight,
Tho' to the Stars and leave my Love behind?
Where is ſhe now? where is my Queen! my Bride!
My Charmer! my *Ameſtris!*
Mem. Speak not of her.
Artax. Not ſpeak.——
Mem. Nor think of her if poſſible.
Artax. Was ſhe not ſnatch'd, torn from my helpleſs Arms,
Whilſt every God look'd on and ſaw the Wrong,
Heard her Loud Cries, which vainly ſtrove to rouſe
Their ſlow unready Vengeance? Was ſhe not
Forc'd from my panting Boſom (yet I live!)
Ev'n on our Bridal Day? Then, when our Flames

Were

Were kindly joyn'd, and made but one desire;
Then, when she sigh'd and gaz'd, and blush'd and sigh'd;
When every touch, when every Joy grew fiercer,
And those that were behind were more than Mortal.
To lose her then! Oh!——
And yet you bid me think of her no more?

Mem. I do; for the bare mention turns my Brain,
And ev'n now I border upon Madness;
So dreadful is the very Apprehension
Of what may be.

Artax. Can we make thought go back?
Will it not turn again? Cleave to our Breasts?
And urge remembrance till it sting us home?
Ha! Now the Ghastly Scene is set before me;
And as thou said'st it runs me to distraction.
Behold her Beauties, form'd for Kings to serve,
Held Vile, and treated like an abject Slave!
Helpless amidst her Cruel Foes she stands,
Insulting *Artemisa* mocks her Tears,
And bids her call the God's and me in vain.

Mem. Would that were all.

Artax. Ha! whither would'st thou drive me?

Mem. Did you like me consider that Dog *Mirza*
Early to Hell devoted, and the Furies,
Born, Nurs'd, and bred a Villain, you would fear
The worst Effects his Malice could express
On Virtue which he hates, when in his Power.

Artax. What is the worst?

Mem. What my old faltring Tongue
Trembles to utter; Goatish Lust and Rape.

Artax. Ha! Rape! If there are Gods, it is impossible.

Mem. Oh! dreadful Image for a Father's thought,
To have his only Child, her Sex's boast,
The Joy of Sight and Comfort of his Age,
Dragg'd by a Villain Slave his ruthless Hand
Wound in her Hair, to some remote dark Cell,
A Scene for Horrour fit, there to be blotted
By his foul Lust, 'till Appetite be gorg'd.
Let me grow Savage first, let this old Hand
That oft has blest her, in her Blood be drench'd,
Let me behold her dead, dead at my foot,
To spare a Father's greater Shame and Sorrow.

Artax. A Father! What's a Father's Plague to mine?
A Husband, and a Lover! If it can be,
If there is such a hoarded Curse in store;

Transfix me now ye Gods, now let your Thunder
Fall on my Head, and ſtrike me to the Centre,
Leaſt if I ſhould ſurvive my ruin'd Honour
And injur'd Love; I ſhould ev'n Curſe your Godheads,
Run Banning and Blaſpheming thro' the World,
And with my Execrations fright your Worſhippers
From kneeling at your Altars.

Enter Cleone *with a dark Lanthorn and Key.*

Cleo. This way the Ecchoing Accents ſeem to come,
Sure it is the wretched Prince! Oh can you hear him
And yet refuſe to lend your Aid, ye Gods?

Artax. This Gloom of horrid Night ſuits well my Soul,
Love, Sorrow, Conſcious Worth, and Indignation,
Stir mad Confuſion in my lab'ring Breaſt,
And I am all o're Chaos.

Cleo. Is this, alas!
The State of *Artaxerxes*, *Perſia*'s Heir?
Not one Poor Lamp to chear the diſmal ſhade
Of this huge Holy Dungeon; Slaves, Murderers,
Villains that Croſſes wait for, are not us'd thus;
I'll ſhew my ſelf. [*She turns the Light, and comes towards* Art. & Mem.

Mem. Ha! whence this Gleam of Light?

Artax. Fate is at Hand, let's haſt to bid it welcome,
It brings an end of Wretchedneſs.

Cleo. Speak lower.
I am a Friend; long live Prince *Artaxerxes.*

Art. What Wretch art thou, that hail'ſt me with a Curſe?
Come from that Cloud that muffles up thy Face,
And if thou haſt a Dagger, ſhew it boldly,
We wiſh to die.

Cleo. Think better of my Errand,
I bring you Bleſſings, Liberty and Life,
And come the Miniſter of happier Fate; [*Turns the Light on her ſelf.*
Now down my Blood! down to my trembling Heart,
Nor ſparkle in my Viſage to betray me. [*Aſide.*

Artax. Ha! as I live a Boy! a bluſhing Boy!
Thou wer't not form'd ſure for a Murderer's Office,
Speak then, and tell me what and whence thou art.

Cleo. Oh! ſeek not to unvail a trivial Secret,
Which known imports you not. I am a Youth
Abandon'd to Misfortunes from my Birth,
And never knew one Cauſe to joy in Life,
But this that puts it in my Pow'r to ſave
A Prince like *Artaxerxes.* Ask no more,
But follow thro' the Mazes that I tread,

Until you find your ſafety.
Artax. Thus forbidding
Thou giv'ſt me cauſe t'Enquire; are then the Guards,
That when the Day went down, with ſtricteſt Watch
Obſerv'd the Temple Gates, remov'd or fled?
Cleo. They are not but with Numbers reinforc'd
Keep every Paſſage; only one Remains
Thro' *Mirza*'s Palace, open to your Flight.
Mem. Ha! *Mirza!* there's Damnation in his Name,
Ruin, Deceit, and Treachery attend it;
Can Life, can Liberty or ſafety come
From him? or ought that has an Int'reſt in him?
Rather, ſuſpect this feigning Boy his Inſtrument,
To plunge us deeper yet, if poſſible
In Miſery; perhaps ſome happy accident
As yet to us unknown, preſerves us from
The utmoſt Malice of his Hate, while here.
This ſets his wicked Wit at work to draw us
Forth from this Holy Place, much better be
The Pris'ners of the God's, than wear his Fetters.
Cleo. Unfortunate Suſpicion! What ſhall I ſay
To urge 'em to be ſafe and yet preſerve
My wretched ſelf unknown?
Artax. Surely that Face,
Was not deſign'd to hide diſſembled Malice,
Say Youth, art thou of *Mirza*'s Houſe; (as ſure thou muſt,
If thou pretend'ſt to lead us that way forth;)
And can'ſt thou be a Friend of *Artaxerxes?*
Whom that fell Dog, that Miniſter of Devils,
With moſt opprobrious Injuries has loaded.
Cleo. Tho' I am his, yet ſure I never ſhar'd
His Hate; ſhall I confeſs and own my Shame
Oh Heavens!——— [*Aſide.*
Mem. Mark th' unready Traytor ſtammers;
Half-bred and of the Mungrel Strain of Miſchief,
He has not Art enough to hide the Cheat,
His deep deſigning Lord had better plotted.
Away! thinks he ſo poorly of our Wit,
To gull us with a Novice? If our Fate
Has giv'n us up, and mark'd us for Deſtruction,
Tell him, we are reſolv'd to meet it here.
Cleo. Yet hear me Prince, ſince you ſuſpect me ſent
By *Mirza*, to enſnare you, know I ſerve,
Oh Gods! to what am I reduc'd! (*Aſide*)——his Daughter;

Some God compaſſionate of your Woes has ſtirr'd
A Woman's Pity, in her ſofter Breaſt:
And 'tis for her I come to give you Liberty.
I beg you to believe me. [*She weeps.*

Artax. See, he weeps!

Mem. The waiting Tears ſtood ready for Command,
And now they flow to varniſh the falſe Tale.

Artax. His Daughter, ſay'ſt thou? I have ſeen the Maid,
Doſt thou ſerve her? And could ſhe ſend thee to me?
'Tis an unlikely Riddle.

Mem. Perhaps 'tis meant,
That ſhe who ſhares his poiſonous Blood, ſhall ſhare
The Pleaſure of his Vengeance, and inure
The Woman's Hands and Eyes to Death and Miſchief.
But thou her Inſtrument, be gone and ſay,
The Fate of Princes is not Sport for Girls.

Cleo. Some envious Power blaſts my pious Purpoſe,
And nought but Death remains; O that by that
I might perſwade him to believe and truſt me;
And fly that Fate which with the Morning waits him. [*Aſide.*
I grieve, my Lord, to find your hard Suſpicion,
Debars me from preſerving your dear Life
(Which not your own, *Ameſtris* wiſhes more)
To Morrow's dawn (oh! let me yet prevail!)
The Cruel Queen reſolves ſhall be your laſt,
Oh fly! Let me Conjure you, ſave your ſelf.
May that moſt awful God that here is worſhipp'd
Deprive me of his chearful Beams for ever,
Make me the wretched'ſt thing he ſees while living,
And after Death the loweſt of the Damn'd,
If I have any thought but for your ſafety.

Artax. No I have found the Malice of my Miſtreſs,
Since I refus'd her Love when ſhe was proffer'd ——!
By her Ambitious Father for my Bride,
And on a worthier Choice beſtow'd my Heart,
She vows Revenge on me for ſlighted Beauty.

Cleo. My Lord, you do her moſt unmanly wrong,
She owns the Merit of the fair *Ameſtris*,
Nor ever durſt imagine ſhe deſerv'd you.
Oh ſpare that Thought, nor blot her Virgin's Fame.
In ſilence ſtill ſhe wonder'd at your Vertues,
Bleſt you, nor at her own Ill Fate repin'd;
This wounds her moſt, that you ſuſpect unkindly
Th' Officious Piety that would have ſav'd you.

Careleſs of an offended Father's Rage;
For you alone concern'd ſhe charg'd me, guide you
When Midnight Sleep had clos'd obſerving Eyes,
Safe thro' her Father's with this Key——
And if I met with any that durſt bar
Your Paſſage forth, ſhe bid me greet him thus——
[*Stabs her ſelf*, Artax. *catching her as ſhe falls.*
What haſt thou done raſh Boy?
Cleo. Giv'n you the laſt,
And only Proof remain'd that could convince you,
I held your Life much dearer than my own.
Mem. Horrid Amazement chills my very Veins!
Cleo. Let me conjure you with my lateſt Breath,
Make haſt to ſeize the means that may preſerve you,
This Key amidſt the Tumult of this Night [*Giving the Key.*
Will open you a way thro' *Mirza*'s Palace,
May every God aſſiſt and guard your Flight;
And oh when all your Hopes of Love and Glory
Are Crown'd with juſt Succeſs; will you be good,
And think with Pity on the loſt *Cleone.*
Artax. Ten thouſand diſmal Fancies crowd my Thoughts
Oh! is it poſſible thou can'ſt be ſhe,
Thou moſt unhappy fair one?
Cleo. Spare my Shame,
Nor call the Blood, that flows to give me Peace,
Back to my dying Cheeks. Can you forget
Who was my Father? And remember only
How much I wiſh'd I had deſerv'd your Friendſhip?
Nay, let my Tongue grow bold, and ſay, your Love,
But 'twas not in my Fate.
Artax. What ſhall I ſay,
To witneſs how my grateful Heart is touch'd?
But oh why would'ſt thou give this fatal Inſtance?
Why haſt thou ſtain'd me with thy Virgin Blood?
I ſwear, ſweet Saint, for thee I could forgive
The Malice of thy Father, tho' he ſeeks
My Life and Crown; thy Goodneſs might atone
Ev'n for a Nation's Sins; look up and live,
And thou ſhalt ſtill be near me as my Heart.
Cleo. Oh charming Sounds! that gently lull my Soul
To Everlaſting Reſt; I ſwear 'tis more
More Joy to die thus bleſt than to have liv'd
A Monarch's Bride; may every Bleſſing wait you
In War and Peace, ſtill may you be the greateſt,

The Favourite of the God's, and Joy of Men——
I faint! oh let me lean upon your Arm—— [*She dies.*

Artax. Hold up the Light my Father; ha! ſhe Swoons!
The Iron Hand of Death is on her Beauties,
And ſee like Lillies nipp'd with Froſt they languiſh.

Mem. My tough old Soldier's Heart melts at the Sight,
And an unwonted Pity moves my Breaſt,
Ill fated Maid too good for that damn'd Race,
From which thou drew'ſt thy Being! Sure the Gods
Angry e're while, will be at length appeas'd
With this Egregious Victim; Let us tempt 'em
Now while they ſeem to ſmile.

Artax. A Beam of Hope,
Strikes thro' my Soul, like the firſt Infant Light,
That glanc'd upon the Chaos; if we reach
The open City, Fate may be ours again.
But oh whate're Succeſs or Happineſs
Attend my Life, ſtill fair unhappy Maid,
Still ſhall thy Memory be my Grief and Honour,
On one fix'd Day in each returning Year,
Cypreſs and Myrtle for thy Sake I'll wear,
Ev'n my *Ameſtris* thy hard Fate ſhall mourn,
And with freſh Roſes Crown thy Virgin urn.
Till in *Elyſium* bleſt thy gentle Shade
Shall own my Vows of Sorrow juſtly paid. [*Exeunt.*

End of the Fourth Act.

ACT

ACT. V.

SCENE I. Mirza's *Palace.*

Enter Mirza, Magas, *and Attendants with Lights.*

Mirz. PHO! You o're rate the Danger.
Mag. If I do
We err in the Extreams, ſince you Eſteem it
As much too lightly; think you then 'tis nothing.
This horrid Jar of Tumult and Confuſion?
Heads white with Years, and vers'd in long Experience,
Who yet remember all the different Changes
A Rolling Age produces, cannot call
To mind one Inſtance dreadful as this Night.
Infernal Diſcord hideous to behold,
Hangs like it's evil Genius o're the City,
And ſends a Snake to every vulgar Breaſt.
From ſeveral Quarters the mad Rabble ſwarm
Arm'd with the Inſtruments of haſty Rage,
And in confus'd diſorderly Array
Moſt formidable March; their differing Clamours,
Together joyn'd compoſe the deafning Sound;
Arm! Arm! they Cry, Religion is no more,
Our Gods are ſlighted, whom if we revenge not
War, Peſtilence and Famine will enſue,
And Univerſal ruin ſwallows all.
Mirz. A Crew of mean unthinking heartleſs Slaves,
With eaſe ſtirr'd up to mutiny, and quell'd
With the ſame eaſe, with like Expreſſions ſhew
Their Joy or Anger both are noiſe and tumult.
Aud ſtill when Holydays make Labour ceaſe,
They meet and Shout; do theſe deſerve our Fears?
Mag. Moſt certainly they may; if we conſider
Each Circumſtance of Peril that Concurrs;
Tigranes with the reſt that 'ſcap'd the Temple,
Are mix'd amongſt this Herd, and urge the Wrongs

Which with the Gods their Prince and *Memnon* ſuffer.
Mirz. Nor need we fear ev'n that, ſafe in the Aid
And Number of our Friends, who treble theirs,
For this mad Rout that hum and ſwarm together
For want of ſomewhat to employ their Folly;
Indulge 'em in their Fancy for Religion.
Thou and thy holy Brotherhood of Prieſts,
Shall in Proceſſion bear the ſacred Fire,
And all our Golden Gods, Let their Friends judge
If ſtill they look not kindly as of Old;
'Tis a moſt apt Amuſement for a Crowd,
They'll gaze, and gather round the gaudy Shew,
And quite forget the Thoughts of Mutiny;
A Guard ſhall wait you.
Mag. Why go not you too with us?
They hold your Wiſdom in moſt high regard,
And will be greatly ſway'd by your Perſwaſion,
Th' occaſion is well worth your Care and Preſence.
Mirz. O! you'll not need my Aid: Beſides, my Friend,
My Hours this Night are deſtin'd to a Task
Of more import, than are the Fates of Millions
Such grovelling Souls as theirs. As yet the Secret
Is Immature, nor worth you preſent knowledge:
To Morrow that and all my Breaſt is yours,
I muſt not, dare not truſt him with my weakneſs,
'Twill mark me for his ſcorn, 'tis yet ſome Wiſdom } *Aſide.*
If we muſt needs be fools to hide our Folly. }
Mag. He means the Priſ'ners death, let him engroſs }
The Peoples hate, Monopolize Damnation, }
I will be ſafely Ignorant of Miſchief
Hereafter when your Wiſdom ſhall think fit
To ſhare thoſe thoughts, and truſt 'em with your Friend,
I ſhall be pleas'd to know; This inſtant Hour,
My Cares are all employ'd on my own Province,
Which haſts me hence.
Mirz May all your Gods aſſiſt you. *Exeunt.*

SCENE

SCENE II.

An Apartment in Mirza's *Palace.*

Enter Ameſtris.

Ameſ. Will ye not hear, ye ever Gracious Gods?
Since ſure you do not joy in our Misfortunes,
But only try the Strength of our frail Vertue.
Are not my Sorrows full? Can ought be added?
My Royal Lord and Father! ye dear Names
In which my all of Happineſs was ſumm'd.
What have the Miniſters of Fate done with you?
Are you not dead? Too ſure! That's paſt a doubt;
O *Memnon*! Oh my Prince! My Father! Oh my Husband!

Enter Mirza.

Mirz. Such *Juno* was (except alone thoſe Tears)
When, upon *Ida's* Top, ſhe charm'd the God
That long had been a Stranger to her Bed;
Made him forget the Buſineſs of the World,
And lay aſide his Providence, t'employ
The whole Divinity upon her Beauty.
And ſure 'twas worth the while, had I been Jove,
So had I too been pleas'd, to be deceiv'd
Into Immortal Joys. Oh ceaſe thy Tears!——

Ameſ. Give 'em me back, or if the Grave and thou
Reſtore to none, oh joyn my Fate to theirs;
Shut us together in ſome ſilent Vault,
Where I may ſit and weep till Death's kind Hand
Shall lay me gently by my Lord's dear ſide,
And huſh my Sorrows in Eternal Slumber.

Mirz. In pity to your Form aſſwage thoſe Tears,
Sorrow is Beauty's Bane; nor let your Breaſt
Harbour a Fear; I wage not War with fair ones;
But wiſh you would efface thoſe ugly Thoughts,
That live in your Remembrance to perplex you;
Let Joy, the native of your Soul return,
And Love's gay God ſit ſmiling in your Eyes,

As e'rſt he did; I wiſh you wondrous well,
And would ſo fully Recompence the Loſs
You fondly mourn, that when you count the Gains,
Your ſelf ſhould own your Fortunes are well chang'd.
Ameſ. Oh Impious Comforter! talk'ſt thou of Joy,
When Nature dictates only Death and Horrour,
Is there a God can break the Laws of Fate?
And give me back the precious Lives I've loſt?
What nam'ſt thou Recompence? Can ought atone
For Blood? a Father's and a Husband's Blood?
Such Comfort brings the hungry midnight Wolf,
When having ſlain the Shepherd, ſmear'd with Gore,
He leaps amidſt the helpleſs bleating Flock.
Mirz. Away with this Perverſeneſs of thy Sex,
Theſe fooliſh Tears, theſe peeviſh Sighs and Sobbings!
Look up, be gay, and chear me with thy Beauties,
And, to thy wiſh I will indulge thy Fancy,
Not all the imagin'd Splendor of the Gods
Shall match thy Pomp, ſublimely ſhalt thou ſhine,
The Boaſt and Glory of our *Aſian* World;
Nor ſhall one She of all thy towring Sex
Out-rival thee (thou lovely Fair) in Power,
Oh think on Power, on Power and Place ſupreme.
Ameſ. There is but one, one only thing to think on,
My Murther'd Lord, and his dark gaping Grave,
That waits unclos'd impatient of my coming.
Mirz. Oh liſten gentle Maid, while I impart
A Story of ſuch Softneſs to thy Ear,
As (like the Halcyon brooding o're the Waves)
May with its Influence huſh thy ſtormy Griefs.
Ameſ. Begone, and if thou bear'ſt one Thought of Pity
In that hard Breaſt; oh leave me to my ſelf
Nor by thy Preſence hideous to my Soul,
And horrid Conſolations ſtrive to add
To my full Woes that ſwell'd without thy Help,
All ready riſe and bubble o're the Margent.
Mirz. What if I talk'd of Love?
Ameſ. Of Love! oh Monſter!
Mirz. If Love be monſtrous, ſo is this fair Frame,
This beauteous World, this Canopy, the Sky;
That ſparkling ſhines with Gems of Light innumerable,
And ſo art thou and I, ſince Love made all;
Who kindly reconcil'd the jarring Atoms
In friendly League, and bid 'em be a World.

Frame not thy lovely Mouth then to Blaſpheme
Thy great Creator, thou art his, and made for
His more peculiar Service; thy bright Eyes,
Thy moiſt red Lip, thy riſing ſnowy Boſom,
Thy every Part was made to furniſh Joy,
Ev'n to a riotous Exceſs of Happineſs;
Oh give me but to taſte thy bliſsful Charms,
And take my Wealth, my Honour, Power, take all,
All, All for Recompence.

Ameſ. Execrable Wretch!
Thus! Is it thus thou wouldſt aſſwage my Sorrows?
When thy inhuman Bloody Cruelty,
Now with redoubling Pangs cleaves my poor Heart,
Com'ſt thou beſpotted with the recent Slaughter
To proffer impious Love? Accurſed Fiend!
Horrour and Grief ſhall turn me to a Fury,
Still with my Ecchoing Cries, I will purſue thee,
And hollow Vengeance in thy guilty Ears;
Vengeance for Murther! for my Prince's Murther!
And for my poor old Father think not Villain
Who art the Plague and Scourge of Human kind;
That there is Peace for thee, whilſt I run mad
With raging Sorrow; Vengeance, Vengeance waits thee,
Great as my Woes!—— My dear! dear! *Artaxarxes!*

Mirz. I am not lucky at the gloſſing Art
Of catching Girls with Words, but 'tis no matter,
Force is a ſure Reſort, and when at laſt
Fierce as a towring Falcon from her Height,
I ſtoop to ſtrike the Prey, it is my own. [*Aſide.*
Obſtinate Fool! how dar'ſt thou croſs my Wiſhes:
Since the ſame Hand that has aveng'd me well,
Upon my other Foes Commands thy Fate,
Tho' Mercy in Compaſſion of thy Beauty
Reach out her Hand to ſave thee, yet if urg'd
Revenge may ſtill take place; think well on that.

Ameſ. That, that is all the Mercy which I ask,
Indulge thy thirſty Malice in my Blood,
And haſten me to Peace. My Woman's Heart
Shall gather all its little ſtock of Courage
To arm me for the Blow. Tho' Death be terrible,
Ghaſtly and Pale; yet I will joy to meet him;
My better Life already is deſtroy'd,
Imperfect now, and wanting half my ſelf,
I wonder here in vain, and want thy Hand

To guide and re-unite me to my Lord.
Mirz. Alas! thou haſt not read aright thy Deſtiny,
Matter of much Import requires thy Life,
And ſtill detains thee here; Come, I'll inſtruct thee,
And put thee in the way of Fate's Deſign. [*Laying hold on her.*
Ameſ. Unhand me, Villain!
Mirz. Nay, you muſt not ſtruggle,
Nor frown, and look askew; fantaſtick Sex!
That put Men on the Drudgery to force you
To your own Satisfaction.
Ameſ. Let me go,
Abhorr'd, deteſted Monſter! Shall he brave you,
You aweful Gods? Shall not your Lightning blaſt him?
Mirz. Oh no! Your Gods have Pleaſures of their own,
Some mortal Beauty charms the wanton *Jove*,
Within whoſe Arms he Revels, nor has Leiſure
To mind thy fooliſh Screaming.
Ameſ. Hear me now, ſweet Heaven,
Save me, ye Gods! oh ſave me! ſave me! ſave me!
Mirz. Come, come along! you ſee you ſtrive in vain. [*Striving*
Ameſ. Is there no Hope of Aid from Gods or Men? [*with her.*
Oh let me turn to thee then, kneel to thee,
And with my Pray'rs and Tears implore thy Pity.
Mirz. Speak, for Enchantment dwells upon thy Tongue,
And all the flattering Spirits in my Blood
Dance nimbly on to the Cœleſtial Sound.
Ameſ. What ſhall I ſay to move him to Compaſſion?
Thus groveling, proſtrate thus upon the Earth,
Let me conjure you, ſpare my Virgin-Honour,
Spare to commit a Wrong to you unprofitable;
Yet worſe to me than Torments, Racks and Death;
Kill me the laſt of my unhappy Race,
And let old *Memnon*'s Name with me be loſt,
If Death be not enough, let me live wretched,
Pull off theſe Robes, and cloath me like a Slave,
Then ſend me out to labour at ſome Village,
Where I may groan beneath a cruel Maſter,
Be hardly us'd. and want even Food and Rayment;
Till Cold, and Dirt, and Poverty ſhall change,
And make me loathſome as my Fellow-Wretches.
Oh! Let my Rags claim only this one Priviledge,
To wrap me in the Grave a ſpotleſs Maid.
Mirz. That Tongue which pleads makes all Intreating vain,
Thy every Motion, each complaining Accent

Warms

Warms me afresh and urges new Desire;
Thou art, thou must be mine, nor Heaven, nor Earth,
Nor the conspiring Power of Hell shall save thee;
I long to lose my Age in thy Embraces,
To bask and wanton in thy warmer Sun,
Till a new Youth shoot thro' me.

Ames. Chast *Diana*,
And thou the Guardian of the Marriage-Bed, [*Getting loose from him.*
Thou Royal *Juno*! oh protect thy Votary.

Mem. My jaded Age and weak enervate Limbs
Falter and shrink unequal to their Office,
I prithee, yield, come, yield, and be a Queen! [*Laying hold on her again.*
Yield, and be any thing! I cannot bear
These fierce convulsive Starts, this raging Flame
That drinks my Blood.

Ames. Oh never, never, never!
A Cause like this will turn me to a Fighter,
To my last Gasp, to Death I will resist.

Mirz. My coward Strength, dost thou go back from Beauty?
Rouze, and deserve the Pleasure thou wouldst taste.

Ames. Unmanly Traytor!—— seize him all ye Fiends.

In the Struggle, she draws his own Ponyard, and stabs him.

Mirza *falling.*] Damnation, oh my Heart! the Curled Steel
Has struck me to the Earth.

Ames. There sink for ever!
Nor rise again to plague the wretched World.

Mirz. My heated Blood ebbs out, and now too late
My cooler Reason bids me curse my Folly;
Oh Ideot, Ideot! to be caught so poorly;
Where are thy fine Arts now? Unravell'd all,
Mangl'd and cut to Pieces by a Girl!
Oh Shame of Wisdom! when Revenge was sure,
And Fate was in my Grasp, to lose it all,
Neglect the Noble Game, and run out my Years,
On the Pursuit of Joys I could not taste;
My Memory must be the Jest of Boys.

Ames. My boasted Courage sinks at sight of Blood, [*Letting fall*
Tho' justly shed, and I grow stiff with Horrour. [*the Ponyard.*

Mirza *attempting to rise, falls again.*

It won't be! Life gushes out amain,
And I shall dye without Revenge or Aid;
What Noise is that? without there! Help! [*Trampling without.*

Ames.

Ameſ. Oh Heavens!
What will become of me?

Enter Orchanes *haſtily.*

Orch. My Lord! Where are you?
Bleeding! and on the Ground! what wretched Accident?——
Then Fate reſolves to make this Night compleat,
Such as ſucceeding Horrours ne're ſhall match.
Mirz. Oh my *Orchanes!* I am fall'n vilely,
And this laſt Part of Life will fully all
The Wiſdom and Renown of what is paſt,
Methought thou talk'dſt of Horrors, ſpeak 'em boldly,
And try if ought can add to this Confuſion.
Orch. Prepare, my Lord, and ſummon all your Wiſdom,
Your utmoſt Conſtancy of Soul to hear——
Mirz. No more! I cannot wait thy Preparation,
Let the ill Fortune take me as it finds me.
Orch. Then hear it thus; your Daughter's dead.——
Mirz. My Daughter!
Thy Words have met with at unguarded Side,
And pierce even thro' my Soul. Say, How? Where? Tell me!—
Orch. As with a Guard I kept the Temple Gates,
I heard old *Memnon* and the Pris'ner Prince
Loud as the roaring Ocean in a Storm,
Ecchoing their Rage thro' the vaſte ſounding Dome,
When on a ſudden e're the Night had gain'd
Four Hours at moſt, the Noiſe was huſh'd in Silence,
Wondring and Curious of the Cauſe, I enter'd,
And found, oh Grief to Sight! your Lovely Daughter
Dreſt like a Boy, then warm, and newly dead,
One Wound was on her Breaſt. Why ſhe was there,
Or how we know not; to compleat the Ill,
The Pris'ners both are fled.
Mirz. Fled! 'tis impoſſible.
Ha! which way? whither? how? they could not fly!
Ameſ. Oh wondrous turn of Joy, are they not dead then?
Orch. They could not 'ſcape the Guards, no other Paſſage
Remain'd but yours, and ev'n that was laſt.
Upon the Inſtant I beſet each Avenue
Which to your Palace leads; happily as yet
They are not paſt from thence!
Ameſ. Guard 'em, ye Gods!
Mirz. Find 'em again *Orchanes*, e're I dye,

Or

Or I am more than double damn'd; this Loſs
Is worſe than mine, worſe than my Daughter's Death,
'Tis Death of my Revenge. Malicious Fortune!
She took the Moment when my Wiſdom nodded,
And ruin'd me at once. O doating Fool!
Thou Fool of Love and of pernicious Woman!
I ſicken! Nature fails me! Oh Revenge!
Will not thy Cordial keep back flying Life?
It ſhall! *Orchanes* drag that Trait'reſs to me.

Ameſ. Oh if thou art a Man, I charge thee looſe me,
And ſcorn his Bidding, ſcorn to be his Slave,
A Devil's Drudge in Miſchief. Save me from Death,
Have Pity on my Youth, oh ſpare my Youth!

Orchanes *pulls* Ameſtris *down to* Mirza.

Mirz. Hearken not to her! drag her! pull her down!
Shall *Memnon* boaſt of thee, while I dye Childleſs,
No, to *Cleone*'s Ghoſt thou art a Victim,
Oh could I but have ſeen thee with thoſe Eyes
I view thee now, I had been wiſe and ſafe;
That Face ſhall make no more Fools in this World,
Down! bear thy fatal Beauties down to Hell,
And try if thou can'ſt charm amongſt the Dead.
Dye Witch! Enchantreſs dye! [*He ſtabs her.*

Ameſ. Ah! Mercy Heavens!

Mirz. I thank the Hand at leaſt for this laſt Service,
Now fly *Orchanes*, haſte and tell the Queen,
My lateſt Breath ſtays for her——Something I would [*Exit* Orchanes.
Important to her Service——I breath ſhort,
Life ſtays in Pain, and ſtruggles to be gone,
I ſtrive in vain to hold it——ha! what mean
Theſe fleeting Shades that dance before my Sight?
'Tis Death, I feel it plain; the dreadful Change
That Nature ſtarts at. Death!——Death!——What is Death?
'Tis a vaſt Diſquiſition, Prieſts and Scholars
Enquire whole Ages, and are yet in Doubt.
My Head turns round!——I cannot form one Thought
That pleaſes me about it,——Dying——muſt reſolve me.

Ameſ. Oh my hard Fortune! muſt I dye? dye now? [Mirza *dyes.*
When *Artaxerxes* calls and bids me live.
His dear lov'd Image ſtays my parting Soul,
And makes it linger in its ruin'd Houſe.
Ha, ſure he's dead!——'tis ſo, and now he ſtands [*Looking on* Mirza.

Arraign'd

Arraign'd before the dread Impartial Judges,
To anſwer to a long Account of Crimes;
Had I but Strength, perhaps my Fate may yet [*Riſing.*
Find out a way to ſave me.
My Love and Father make Life worth my Care,
Alas! My Blood flows faſt, this way I think. [*Goes off faintly.*

Enter at the other ſide Artaxerxes *and* Memnon, *with a Sword and Dark Lanthorn.*

Mem. Ha, here are Lights, hold up thy Weapon, Son.
Artax. And ſee Blood, and a Body on the Floor,
What means this Scene of Death? What Wretch art thou?
Oh all ye juſter Powers, 'tis *Mirza*, ſee,
He ſeems now dead.
Mem. Damnation then is now to him,
Aud if there be one deeper Pit of Sepulchre,
One Plague above the reſt in thoſe dark Regions,
He as the moſt abandon'd Dog may claim it,
And vie for Preference with Devils themſelves.

Re-Enter Ameſtris.

Ameſ. The Doors are Guarded, Fate has clos'd me round.
Artax. Ha, art thou my *Ameſtris?*
Mem. Oh, my Daughter. [*They run to her.*
Ameſ. Are ye then come at laſt to bleſs my Eyes
That could not cloſe without one parting View.
Oh hold me, or I ſink!——
Mem. Alas my Child,——
Artax. My cruel Fears, why art thou pale and faint?
Ha, whence this Blood? oh killing Spectacle.
Ameſ. Forth from my Heart the Crimſon River flows,
My Laviſh Heart that haſtily Conſumes
Its ſmall Remain of Life: Oh lay me gently
On my laſt Bed the Earth, whoſe cold hard Boſom
Muſt ſhortly be the Place of my long Reſt.
Mem. What have we done? or, oh if we have ſinn'd,
What has thy Innocence done to merit this?
Ameſ. That Villain *Mirza*——
Mem. Ha, Say what of him.
Ameſ. Offer'd moſt brutal Outrage to my Honour.
Artax. Oh ye Eternal Rulers of the World,
Could you look on unmov'd? But ſay, inſtruct me,

That

That I might bow before the God that ſav'd thee.
Ameſ. Sure't was ſome Chaſter Power that made me hold,
And taught my trembling Hand to find the way
With his own Ponyard to the Villains Heart.
Mem. Thou art my Daughter ſtill! oh noble Action!
That gives in Death an Interval of Joy.
Ameſ. Juſt in that hour of Fate a Villain enter'd,
By whoſe Aſſiſtance the revengeful *Mirza*
Forc'd me to ſhare Death with him.
Artax. 'Tis paſt, 'tis paſt, [*Lying down.*
And all fires thoſe that lighted up my Soul——
Glory and bright Ambition languiſh now,
And leave me dark and gloomy as the Grave.
Oh thou ſoft dying ſweetneſs!——Shall I Rage
And Curſe my ſelf? Curſe ev'n the God's?——Oh no;
I am the Slave of Fate, and bow beneath
The load that preſſes me; am ſunk to Earth!
And ne're ſhall riſe again; here will I fit
And gaze 'till I am nothing.
Ameſ. Alas! My Lord,——
Fain would I ſtrive to bid you not be ſad,
Fain would I Chear your Grief; but 'tis in vain;
I know by my own Heart it is impoſſible;
For we have lov'd too well. Oh mournful Nuptials;
Are theſe the Joys of Brides? Indeed 'tis hard,
'Tis very hard to part; I cannot leave you,
The Agonizing Thought diſtracts me; hold me,
Oh hold me faſt, Death ſhall not tear me from you.
Artax. Oh could my Arms fence thee from Deſtiny,
The God's might launch their Thunder on my Head;
Plague me with Woes treble to what I feel.——
With Joy, I would endure it all to ſave thee;
What ſhall I ſay? what ſhall I do to ſave thee;
Grief ſhakes my Frame, it melts my very Temper;
My manly Conſtancy and Royal Courage
Run guſhing thro' my Eyes; oh my *Ameſtris*!
Ameſ. And ſee my Father! his white Beard is wet
With the ſad Dew.
Mem. I try'd to Man my Heart,
But could not ſtand the Buffet of this Tempeſt,
It tears me up——My Child! ha! art thou dying?
Ameſ. Indeed I am very Sick! oh hold me up,
My Pain encreaſes, and a Cold damp Dew
Hangs on my Face. Is there no help? No eaſe?

Have I your Arm my Love?
Artax. Thou haſt; My Heart
Doſt thou yet hold.
Amef. Say will you not forget me?
When I am laid for mouldering in my Tomb?
'Tis ſure you will not, ſtill there will be room
For my Remembrance in your noble Heart;
I know you lov'd me truly: Now! I faint!
Oh ſhield me; ſhield me from that ugly Fantome
The Cave of Death! how dark and deep it is!
I tremble at the Sight——his hideous Horror
The Gloom grows o're me——Let me not die there! [*Amef. Dies.*
Art. There Life gave way, and the laſt Roſie Breath
Went in that Sigh. Death like a Brutal Victor
Already enter'd with rude hand defaces,
The lovely Frame he haſt maſter'd; ſee how ſoon
Theſe Starry Eyes have loſt their Light and Luſtre!
Stay let me cloſe their Lids. Now for the Reſt.
Old *Memnon!* ha! Grief has tranſfix'd his Brain,
And he perceives me not!——Now what of thee?
Think'ſt thou to live thou Wretch? Think not of any thing
Thought is Damnation, 'tis the Plague of Devils.
To think on what they are! and ſee, this Weapon
Shall ſhield me from it, plunge me in forgetfulneſs.
Er'e the dire Scorpion Thought can touſe to ſting me.
Lend me thy Boſom, my cold Bride; Ill Fortune [*Lying by her.*
Has done its Worſt, and we ſhall part no more;
Wait for me, Gentle Spirit, ſince the Stars
Together muſt receive us! [*Stabs himſelf.*] Oh well aim'd!
How fooliſh is the Coward's Fear of Death!
Of Death, the gentleſt——ſureſt way to Peace. *Artax. dies.*
[Memnon *ſtands looking on the Bodies*
ſome time, and then ſpeaks.
Mem. Yet will I gaze! Yet! Tho' my Eyes grow ſtiff
And turn to Steel or Marble, here's a Sight
To bleſs a Father! Theſe! Theſe were your Gifts,
Ye bounteous Gods, you'll ſpare my Thanks for 'em,
You gave me Being too, and ſpurn me out
To hoary Wretchedneſs; away, 'twas Cruelty,
Oh Curſed, Curſed, Curſed four Score Years,
Ye Heap of Ills, Ye monſtrous pile of Fatigues!
Sure they lov'd well the very Streams of Blood,
That flow from their pale Boſoms meet and mingle.
Stay, let me view 'em better——Nay, 'tis thus——

If thou art like thy Mother——She dy'd too——
Where is ſhe?——Ha! that Dog, that Villain *Mirza!*
He bearſher from me; Shall we not purſue?——
The Whirl of Battle comes acroſs me, fly!
Begon! They ſhall not, dare not brave me thus!
Hey, 'tis a glorious Sound, ruſh on my Prince,
We'll ſtart and reach the Goal of Fate at once! [*Runs off.*

Enter on the other ſide, Queen *and Attendants with Lights.*

Qu. Why am I am Summon'd with this Call of Death?
This is no common Ruine; *Artaxerxes!*
And *Memnon*'s Daughter. *Mirza* thou art fallen
In pompous Slaughter could not all thy Arts,
That Dold about Deſtruction to our Enemies,
Guard thy own Life from Fate? Vain boſt of Wiſdom
That with fantaſtick Pride, like buſie Children,
Builds Paper Towns and Houſes, which at once
The Hand of Chance o'ereturns and loofly ſcatters.
1 *Att.* Oh Diſmal Sight, [*Looking out.*
Qu. What is it frights thy Eyes?
1 *Att.* Old *Memnon*'s Body.
Qu. 'Tis a grateful Horror.
1 *Att.* Upon the Floor the batter'd Carcaſs lies
Weltring in Gore, whilſt on the marble Wall
A dreadful Maſs of Brains, Grey Hair, and Blood
Is ſmear'd in hideous Mixture.
Qu. Fierce Deſpair
Has forc'd away for the impetuous Soul.
'Tis well he is in Peace——What means this Tumult?
[*Shout, Claſhing of Swords: Enter an Officer his Sword drwan.*
Offic. Fly, Madam, Leſt your Perſon be not ſafe,
The Traytor *Brgoas*, to whoſe Charge you truſted
The Prince your Son has drawn your Guards to joyn him;
And now aſſiſted by the furious Rabble
On every ſide they charge thoſe few who keep
This Place and the Temple with loud Outcries,
Proclaiming, that they mean to free the Priſoners.
Orchanes, e're I fled to give you Notice,
Fell by the Prince's Hand, the raging Torrent
Bore down our weak Reſiſtance, and purſuing
With furious Haſte, ev'n trod upon my Flight.
This Inſtant brings 'em here.

Qu. Let 'em come on,
I cannot fear; this Storm is rais'd too late,
I ſtand ſecur'd of all I wiſh already.

[*Shout and Claſhing of Swords again.*

Enter Artaban, Cleanthes *and Attendants, their Swords drawn.*

Artab. Then Virtue is in vain, ſince baſe Deceit
And Treachery have triumph'd o'er the Mighty.
Oh Nature, let me turn my Eyes away,
Leſt I am Blaſted by a Mother's Sight.

Qu. Ungrateful Rebel! Do thy Impious Arms
Purſue me for my too indulgent Fondneſs
And Care for thee?

Artab. Well has that Care been ſhewn,
Have you not foully ſtain'd my Sacred Fame?
Look on that Scene of Blood; the dire Effects
Of Cruel Female Arts. But oh what Recompence!
What can you give me for my murder'd Love?
Has not the Labyrinth of your fatal Counſels
Involv'd my Fair, my Lovely, Loſt *Cleone?*
By our Bright Gods I ſwear I will aſſert
The Majeſty of Manly Government,
Nor wear again your Chains, ſtill as our Mother
Be honour'd; rule amongſt your Maids and Eunuchs,
Nor mingle in our State, where mad Confuſion
Shakes the whole Frame, to boaſt a Woman's Cunning.

Qu. Thou talk'ſt as if thy infant Hand could graſp
Guide and Command the Fortune of the World,
But thou art young in Power. Remember, Boy,
Thy Father once the Hero of his Age,
Was proud to be the Subject of my Sway,
The Warrior of the Woman's Wits gave way,
And found it was his Intereſt to obey,
And doſt thou hope to ſhake off my Command;
Doſt thou? The Creature of my forming Hand.
When I aſſert the Power, thou dar'ſt invade,
Like Heaven I will reſolve to be obey'd,
And Rule or Ruine that which once I made.

[*Exit* Queen *and Attendants.*

Artab. Let a Guard wait the Queen, tho' Nature plead
For Reverence to her Perſon, jealous Power
Muſt watch her ſubtle and ambitious Wit.
Haſt thou ſecur'd the Impious Prieſt *Cleanthes?*

Magas, that Wretch, that proſtitutes our Gods.
Cleon. Already he has met the Fate he merited,
This Night the Hypocrite in Grand Proceſſion
March'd thro' the City to appeaſe the People,
And bore the Gods along to aid his Purpoſe.
When on a ſudden, like a Hurricane,
That ſtarts at once, and ruffles all the Ocean,
Some Fury more than mortal ſeiz'd the Crowd;
At once they ruſh'd, at once they cry'd Revenge;
Then ſnatch'd, and tore the trembling Prieſt to Pieces.
What was moſt ſtrange, no Injury was offer'd,
To any of the Brotherhood beſide,
But all their Rage was ended in his Death.
Like formal Juſtice that ſeverely ſtrikes,
And in an inſtant is ſerene and calm.
Artab. Oh my *Cleanthes*, do but caſt thy Thoughts
Back on the recent Story of this Night;
And thou with me wilt wonder, and confeſs
The Gods are great and juſt. Well have you mark'd
Celeſtial Powers, your righteous Deteſtation
Of Sacrilege, of baſe and bloody Treachery.
May this Example guide my future Sway;
Let Honour, Truth and Juſtice crown my Reign,
Ne're let my Kingly Word be giv'n in vain,
But ever ſacred with my Foes remain.
On theſe Foundations ſhall my Empire ſtand,
The Gods ſhall vindicate my juſt Command,
And guard that Power they truſted to my Hand.

[*Exeunt Omnes.*

End of the Fifth Act.

EPILOGUE.

EPILOGUE,

Spoke by Mrs. *Bracegirdle.*

THESpleen and Vap ours, and this doleful Play
Have Mortify'd me to that Height to day,
That I am almoſt in the Mortal Mind,
To Dye indeed, and leave you all behind.
Know then, ſince I reſolve in Peace to part,
I mean to leave to one alone my Heart.
(Laſt Favours will admit of no Partage,
Ibar all Sharing, but upon the Stage.)
To one who can with one alone be bleſt,
The Peaceful Monarch of a ſingle Breaſt.
To One--------but oh! how hard 'twill be to find
That Phœnix in your fickle changing Kind!
New Loves, new Intereſts, and Religions new,
Still your Fantaſtick Appetites purſue.
Your fickly Fancies loath what you poſſeſs,
And every reſtleſs Fool would change his Place,
Some weary of their Peace *and Quiet grown,*
Want to be hoiſted up aloft, and ſhown;
Whilſt from the envy'd Height, the wiſe get ſafely down.
We find your wavering Temper to our Coſt,
Since all our Pains *and Care to pleaſe is loſt.*
Muſick in vain, ſupports with friendly Aid
Her Siſter Poetry's declining Head.
Show but a Mimick Ape, or French *Buffoon,*
You to the other Houſe in Shoals are gone,
And leave us here to tune our Crowds alone.

Muſt

Muſt Shakeſpear, Fletcher, *and Laborious* Ben
Be left for Scaramouch *and* Harlequin?
Allow you are unconſtant, yet 'tis ſtrange,
For Senſe is ſtill the ſame; and n'ere can change;
Yet even in that you vary as the reſt,
And every day New Notions are profeſt;
Nay there's a Wit has found, as I am told,
New ways to Heaven, deſpairing of the Old.
He ſwears he'll ſpoil the Clerk's and Sexton's Trade,
Bells ſhall no more be rung, nor Graves be made.
The Hearſe and Six no longer be in Faſhion,
Since all the Faithful may expect Tranſlation.
What think you of the Project? I'm for trying,
I'll lay aſide theſe fooliſh Thoughts of Dying;
Preſerve my Youth and Vigour for the Stage,
And be Tranſlated in a good Old Age.

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